SOME LIKE IT HOT

HIT CROATIA AND PORTUGAL FOR YOUR SUNSHINE FIX

campervan

January 2025

Part of the out&about LIVE family

PASSPORT TO FREEDOM

Explore Europe on the roads less travelled

AIRE WE GO

PLAN THE PERFECT ROAD TRIP ON THE CONTINENT

PERFECT PITCHES

GREAT CAMPSITES IN FRANCE, SPAIN, ITALY, GERMANY & MORE

LITTLE WONDERS

LOVELY LUXEMBOURG & LIECHTENSTEIN

ALPINE ADVENTURES

HOW TO ENJOY VW VANLIFE IN WINTER

NEW CAMPERVANS

➔ SWIFT ➔ HYMER ➔ SUN LIVING

JANUARY 2025 £5.99

01

9 772054 409061 >

DISPLAY UNTIL 19/12/24

HIGHBRIDGE

motorhomes | caravans | campervans

Worth Travelling Miles For

THE LARGEST DEALERSHIP IN THE SOUTH WEST

Main Somerset Branch

Devon Branch

NCC APPROVED WORKSHOPS **HUGE SELECTION TO CHOOSE FROM** **P/X & FINANCE AVAILABLE** (Subject to Status)

A Selection of NEW & USED VAN CONVERSIONS

www.highbridgemotorhomes.co.uk

2021 Wellhouse Conversion	FORD	Sleeps 4	£51,995
2019 Mercedes Marco Polo	MERCEDES	Sleeps 4	£51,995
2020 Rapido Van V55	FIAT	Sleeps 3	£52,000
2020 Dreamer Select Family Van	FIAT	Sleeps 5	£52,400
2020 Adria Twin Supreme 640 SGX	FIAT	Sleeps 3	£52,865
2017 Rapido V68	FIAT	Sleeps 3	£52,995
2020 Dreamer Select D68 Limited	FIAT	Sleeps 4	£53,100
2020 Wildax Aurora	CITROEN	Sleeps 3	£53,240
2020 Wildax Aurora Leisure	CITROEN	Sleeps 3	£53,240
2020 Dreamer Select Living Van	FIAT	Sleeps 4	£53,300
2020 Rapido Van V68	FIAT	Sleeps 3	£53,400
2020 Wildax Constellation 4	FIAT	Sleeps 2	£53,945
2021 Venture Redline 1.6 Highline	VOLKSWAGEN	Sleeps 4	£53,995
2020 Rapido Van V62	FIAT	Sleeps 3	£54,300
2023 Wildax Proteus	FORD	Sleeps 4	£54,995
2020 Wildax Aurora XL	CITROEN	Sleeps 3	£55,240
2020 Wildax Constellation 3 XL	FIAT	Sleeps 2	£55,345
2020 Wildax Constellation 4 XL	FIAT	Sleeps 2	£55,965
2023 Hillside Birchover Classic	VOLKSWAGEN	Sleeps 4	£55,995
2019 Swift Champagne 184	FIAT	Sleeps 2	£55,995
2020 Wildax Constellation 3	FIAT	Sleeps 2	£57,210
2023 Dreamer Capland	FORD	Sleeps 4	£59,995
2023 Elddis Autoquest EVO Cv40	FIAT	Sleeps 2	£59,995
2021 Swift Select 184	FIAT	Sleeps 4	£59,995
2020 Rapido V62	FIAT	Sleeps 3	£59,995
2022 Swift Compact Select C502	FIAT	Sleeps 2	£61,995
2022 Swift Select 184	FIAT	Sleeps 4	£61,995
2023 Volkswagen California Ocean	VOLKSWAGEN	Sleeps 4	£64,995
2021 AutoSleepers Warwick XL	PEUGEOT	Sleeps 2	£64,995
2022 Wildax Proteus	FORD	Sleeps 4	£65,235
2024 Swift Carrera 122	FIAT	Sleeps 2	£65,995
2024 Chausson Sport Line V594	FIAT	Sleeps 2	£65,995
2024 Elddis Autoquest CV40	FIAT	Sleeps 3	£65,995
2024 Elddis Autoquest CV20	FIAT	Sleeps 2	£66,513
2025 Dreamer Fun D55	FIAT	Sleeps 3	£66,650
2023 Swift Carrera 144	FIAT	Sleeps 3	£66,995
2022 Benimar Benivan 124	FIAT	Sleeps 4	£67,995
2024 Wildax Triton	FORD	Sleeps 4	£67,995
2021 Adria Twin Supreme 600 SPB	FIAT	Sleeps 3	£67,995
2021 Dreamer Campervan XL	FIAT	Sleeps 4	£67,995
2022 Wildax Europa	FIAT	Sleeps 2	£67,995
2023 Volkswagen Status ONE Aurora	VOLKSWAGEN	Sleeps 4	£67,995
2023 Dreamer D55 UP	PEUGEOT	Sleeps 4	£67,995
2022 Wildax Constellation 3	FIAT	Sleeps 2	£67,995
2020 Adria Coral Supreme 670 SLT	FIAT	Sleeps 3	£68,865
2020 Adria Coral Supreme 670 SL	FIAT	Sleeps 3	£68,865
2023 Globecar Campscout Elegance	FIAT	Sleeps 2	£68,995
2024 Globecar Possl Roadcamp R	PEUGEOT	Sleeps 3	£68,995
2025 Dreamer Fun D55 UP	FIAT	Sleeps 4	£69,020
2024 Elddis Autoquest CV60	FIAT	Sleeps 2	£69,676
2023 Globecar Roadscout Elegance	FIAT	Sleeps 2	£69,995
2023 Globecar Globescout Elegance	FIAT	Sleeps 2	£69,995
2024 Swift Carrera 132	FIAT	Sleeps 2	£69,995

2023 AutoSleepers Kingham	PEUGEOT	Sleeps 2	£69,995
2024 Swift Trekker S	FORD	Sleeps 4	£70,995
2023 Swift Carrera 122	FIAT	Sleeps 2	£70,995
2024 Swift Trekker X	FORD	Sleeps 4	£71,995
2024 Globecar Roadcruiser	PEUGEOT	Sleeps 2	£71,995
2024 Swift Carrera 144	FIAT	Sleeps 3	£71,995
2020 Wildax Elara	MERCEDES	Sleeps 2	£72,345
2024 Swift Carrera 184	FIAT	Sleeps 4	£72,995
2023 Globecar summit Prime 540	FIAT	Sleeps 2	£73,495
2024 Globecar Summit Shine 540	FIAT	Sleeps 2	£73,995
2024 Dethleffs Globetrail Advantage 640 ES	FIAT	Sleeps 3	£74,995
2023 Wildax Pulsar MK2	FIAT	Sleeps 2	£74,995
2024 Wildax Constellation 3 XL	FIAT	Sleeps 2	£75,995
2024 Dethleffs Globetrail Advantage 600 DS	FIAT	Sleeps 5	£76,495
2024 Wildax Pulsar MK2	FIAT	Sleeps 2	£76,995
2024 Wildax Europa	FIAT	Sleeps 2	£76,995
2025 Swift Carrera 194	FIAT	Sleeps 3	£76,995
2024 Wildax Solaris XL	FIAT	Sleeps 4	£76,995
2024 Wildax Aurora Leisure	FIAT	Sleeps 3	£77,315
2025 Swift Carrera 144	FIAT	Sleeps 3	£77,990
2024 Dreamer Select D62 Limited	FIAT	Sleeps 3	£78,100
2023 Wildax Solaris XL	FIAT	Sleeps 4	£78,110
2024 Dreamer Select D68 Plus	FIAT	Sleeps 3	£78,610
2024 Wildax Aurora Leisure XL	FIAT	Sleeps 3	£78,715
2024 Dethleffs Globetrail Advantage 600 DS	FIAT	Sleeps 5	£78,995
2024 Hillside Hopton	MAN	Sleeps 2	£78,995
2023 Dreamer Select Camper Van XL Limited	FIAT	Sleeps 4	£79,995
2023 Volkswagen Grand California 680	VOLKSWAGEN	Sleeps 2	£79,995
2021 Hymer Grand Canyon S	MERCEDES	Sleeps 4	£79,995
2023 Dreamer Campervan XL LTD	FIAT	Sleeps 4	£79,995
2025 Wildax Pulsar MK2	FIAT	Sleeps 2	£81,945
2024 Dreamer Select Camper Van XL Limited	FIAT	Sleeps 4	£81,995
2023 Adria Twin Supreme 640 SGX	FIAT	Sleeps 2	£81,995
2024 Hillside Hopton Silver	MAN	Sleeps 2	£82,820
2025 Wildax Solaris XL	FIAT	Sleeps 4	£82,995
2024 Dreamer Select Living Van	FIAT	Sleeps 2	£82,995
2023 Wildax Europa	CITROEN	Sleeps 2	£83,110
2023 Dreamer Select Living Van	FIAT	Sleeps 4	£84,150
2024 Adria Twin Supreme 640 SLB	FIAT	Sleeps 3	£84,485
2024 Adria Twin Supreme 640 SLB Artense	FIAT	Sleeps 3	£85,525
2024 Adria Twin Supreme 640 SGX	FIAT	Sleeps 3	£85,665
2025 Adria Twin Supreme 640 SLB	FIAT	Sleeps 3	£87,780
2024 Adria Twin Supreme 640 SGX Sports	FIAT	Sleeps 4	£88,455
2025 Adria Twin Sports 600 SPB	FIAT	Sleeps 4	£88,455
2025 Adria Twin Supreme 640 SGX	FIAT	Sleeps 3	£88,780
2024 Hymer Yellowstone	FIAT	Sleeps 4	£89,960
2024 Wildax Altair	MAN	Sleeps 2	£92,995
2023 Adria Twin Sports 640 SGX	FIAT	Sleeps 4	£94,840
2024 Hymer Free S 600	MERCEDES	Sleeps 4	£95,030
2024 Wildax Altair RS	MAN	Sleeps 2	£97,245
2023 Wildax Altair RL	MAN	Sleeps 2	£98,495
2023 Wildax Altair RS	MAN	Sleeps 2	£98,500
2024 Wildax Altair RL	MAN	Sleeps 2	£109,545

Somerset Branch: 01278 782725
A38 Bristol Road, Highbridge, Somerset, TA9 4EX

Devon Branch: 01626 832792
Higher Brocks Plantation, Teigngrace, Newton Abbot, TQ12 6QZ

Every attempt has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information on this advert, however it is intended as a general guide only and must not be taken as binding. Highbridge Caravan Centre Ltd reserve the right to alter specifications and prices detailed on this advert at anytime without prior notice (Data Updated on 20/11/2024).

Pixabay

HELLO

Despite the gloomy weather, dark mornings and early nights, I like this time of year. I do all my planning for the next 12 months now and it's always a time of great expectation.

One of the first events in my diary is our Campervan Campout festival on the weekend of 2-4 May. As you may know, I present a show on VDubRadio and the station's team will be broadcasting from the festival again this year as well as running the silent disco. I'll be at the festival, of course, so please say hello if you see me around. I might even get to spin a few records, too! All the details of this year's event are on the news pages of this issue and on our new-look website **outandaboutlive.co.uk**

If you're planning your campervan trips for the year ahead, the new Premier Parks brochure is a brilliant resource. It features the best campsites in the UK, each one visited and rated by our editorial team. The brochure is now available as a digital magazine and you can read it here for free **motorhome.ma/premierparks2025**

You should also pay a visit to the excellent Premier Parks website **premier-parks.co.uk** which is fully updated and has links so you can book your pitch online.

Happy campervanning!

IAIN DUFF | Editor

COVER PICTURE courtesy of Bürstner | **buerstner.com**

Join the campervan community... share your pictures and stories

campervan@warnersgroup.co.uk campervan_mag campervan_mag campervanmag

campervan

Warners Group Publications plc
The Maltings, West Street,
Bourne, Lincolnshire PE10 9PH
01778 391000

Publisher
Fleur Chivers
Editorial
Head of Content Daniel Attwood
Editor Iain Duff
01778 392442
iaind@warnersgroup.co.uk
Road Test Editor
Peter Vaughan
peterv@warnersgroup.co.uk
Design Lisa Watson-Bailey
Advertising
Group Head of Advertising
Fleur Chivers 01778 392071
Key Account Manager
Zellah Stark 01778 392093
Media Sales Executive
Emma Hill 01778 392057
Group Commercial Manager
Ashleigh Chadwick 01778 392050
Media Account Manager
Diana Pierre 01778 395019

Advertising Production & Design
Kate Goulding, Viv Lane
outdoorleisure@warnersgroup.co.uk
Marketing
Brand Manager
Lucie Cox 01778 395016
Distribution
01778 391171

How to subscribe
Fully searchable digital library
motorhome.ma/cpvnexact
Digital edition with exclusive extras
motorhome.ma/cpvnpocketmags
Print subscriptions
☎ 01778 392019

© Warners Group Publications plc 2025
All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means without prior permission.

While we welcome written enquiries we regret we cannot offer advice on a personal basis. While every care is taken with unsolicited material submitted for publication, we cannot be responsible for loss or damage. The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the publishers. Every care is taken to ensure that the content of this magazine is accurate, but we assume no responsibility for any effect from errors or omissions. While every care is taken when accepting advertisements, we cannot take responsibility for unsatisfactory transactions.

This publication is printed by Warners Midlands PLC Telephone: **01778 391000**

IN THIS ISSUE

campervan CONTENTS

JANUARY 2025

ROAD TRIPS

6 DESTINATION OF THE MONTH
Leicestershire

8 PORTUGAL
A trip along Portugal's ever-changing longest road

14 CROATIA
Enjoy the glorious scenery along the Croatia coast

20 LUXEMBOURG
Don't pass the Duchy... Pay a visit to one of the world's safest lands

26 CAMPSITES IN EUROPE
Our selection of 10 great sites

VANLIFE

36 LITTLE LIECHTENSTEIN
What's to do in Europe's second-least visited country?

42 ALPINE ADVENTURES
Winter mountain living in a VW

46 EURO VANLIFE
The essentials for campervanning in Europe

54
SUNLIVING

NEW CAMPERVANS

54 SUN LIVING
Adria's entry-level campervan range

58 WHO ARE YA?
We get the lowdown on Somerset-based Autohaus

62 SWIFT MONZA
Leather clad and full of attitude – but is the new Swift practical, too?

68 YUKON V-CITY
A look at Frankia's latest Mercedes-Benz campervan

72 HYMER GRAND CANYON S CROSSOVER
This special CrossOver edition is an off-roader's dream

72
CROSSOVER

REGULARS

32 MEET THE OWNERS
We chat to the people at Back of Beyond

41 LIFE BEYOND BRICKS
Updates from Tash's life on the road

52 NEWS
What's going on in the world of campervans

77 GET INTO GEAR
The latest campervan accessories

UNFORGETTABLE CAMPERVAN ADVENTURES!
Let us take you to all the best places
SUBSCRIBE TO campervan for just £14.99 and enjoy:
- Inspiring road trips
- Reviews of new campervans
- The very best of vanlife AND MUCH MORE!

SUBSCRIBE NOW
motorhome.ma/cpvnspring25

SCAN ME

LEICESTERSHIRE

GetFocusArt/ adobe.stock.com

Leicestershire is something of a hidden gem, offering a mix of attractions that will appeal to history buffs, nature lovers and foodies

Start your campervan adventure at Bradgate Park, a sprawling deer park with stunning views and historic ruins. Leicester itself is a vibrant, multicultural city, and its cathedral features the King Richard III visitor centre, where you can uncover the fascinating story of the recently rediscovered monarch. A short drive away is Belvoir Castle's majestic architecture and beautiful gardens. And for food lovers, Melton Mowbray, the official home of the famous pork pie and Stilton cheese, is a must-visit. With welcoming campsites and plenty to do, you could have all the ingredients for a brilliant road trip.

Pixabay

BRADGATE PARK
A stunning 830-acre park with ancient woodlands, rugged landscapes and roaming deer. It's perfect for hiking and offers views from Old John Tower at the highest point.
W bradgatepark.org

VISIT
RICHARD III

jacekphotos / stock.adobe.com

LEICESTER CATHEDRAL
Explore the cathedral, the final resting place of King Richard III, and visit the nearby visitor centre to learn about the dramatic rediscovery of his remains and the rich history of Leicester.
W leicestercathedral.org

STAY
PREMIER
PARK 2025
The finest UK campsites, independently assessed

EYE KETTLEBY LAKES
This adults-only site with eight fishing lakes is the epitome of luxury and is perfectly positioned to explore the foodie capital, Melton Mowbray, and Leicestershire's other attractions.
W eyekettlebylakes.com

THE ALL NEW
HOPTON RANGE

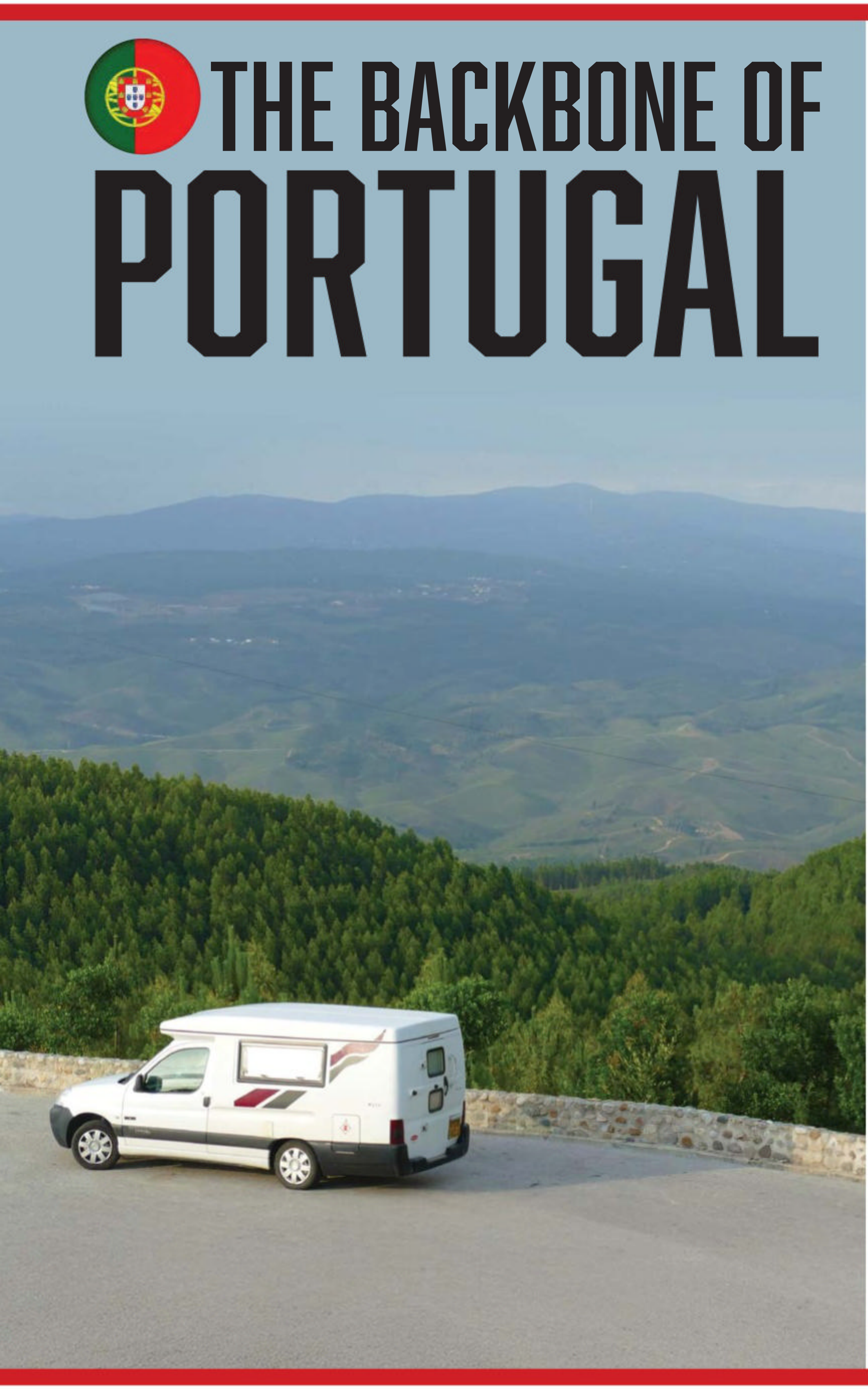
Experience next level comfort with the new Hopton Range!

The all-new Hillside Hopton range available on either the VW Crafter or MAN TGE.
Four interior concepts with enhanced functionality designed to meet your every need.

01332 207976
sales@hillsideleisure.co.uk
www.hillsideleisure.co.uk
Chequers House, Chequers Lane, Derby, DE21 6AW

SCAN ME

THE BACKBONE OF PORTUGAL



It's not every day that you see an evacuation map on approach to a village, especially that looks as complex as the one at the entrance to Barranco do Velho.

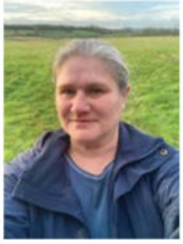
This village of modest whitewashed dwellings is surrounded by forest, in the high hills of the Serra do Caldeirão in southern Portugal and, I guessed, an emergency exit plan would consist of fleeing in any suitable direction if, heaven forbid, a forest fire consumed the hamlet.

That wasn't going to happen the day I was there, when an unseasonable rainstorm engulfed the Algarve and mist seeped ethereally through the woods and valleys of the *serra*. Grassland looked like straw ready to burn, depleted of nutrients, against the flame-red rocks and ochre soil. But the eucalyptus leaves drooped, olive trees dripped with sogginess, and skinned, blackened cork oaks smouldered with steam. Their branches, smothered by lichens and moss, suggested this luscious green rainforest isn't always baking beneath Algarve sunshine.

I was on the N2, Portugal's longest road at 739km (458 miles) that, created in 1945, has become a part of the country's heritage. The coastal

MY 'VAN

Caroline Mills has been camping since childhood… and still loves it! She has a 2008 Romahome Duo Hylo. Based upon a Citroën Berlingo and 1.9m high, the Hylo easily ducks beneath height barriers.



Portugal's longest road offers an ever-changing landscape and the chance to discover forgotten villages, mountain vineyards and walks through ancient cork forests

Words & pictures | Caroline Mills

FIND OUT MORE

- For information about Portugal
  W visitportugal.com/en
- For detailed information about the N2
  W rotan2.pt
- To discover the cork forests and wine tasting in the Alentejo region
  W corktrekking.com
- For tours of Casa de Mateus
  W casadamateus.pt/en

town of Faro, 30km (18 miles) south of Barranco do Velho, is officially the end of the N2, signified by a marker post. The 0km post is in Chaves, a spa town in northern Portugal close to the border with Spain. I travelled the route, which creates a spine along the centre of the country, in reverse, counting down the kilometres.

My tour began at Faro's finest asset, the Ria Formosa that protects the city from the might of the Mediterranean. The delta is designated as a natural park, and a great place from which to see wildlife amid the silvery sandbanks of the snaking inlets. Various organisations offer boat trips from Faro's quayside to go bird and dolphin watching, or simply to observe the river's beauty.

Faro Museum is also an excellent introduction. Permanent exhibition spaces surround an attractive stone pillared courtyard highlighting Roman influences on the town, including an extraordinary mosaic floor discovered nearby.

I should have liked Faro more with its historic old town area where orange trees perfume the cathedral square and fortress walls surround ancient streets. But the fortifications have not defended the town from much mindless graffiti. I was keen to get on the road – having collected and stamped my N2 tourist passport in the visitor information centre.

Citrus groves were the introduction to the N2 leaving Faro. But within 20km (12 miles) the scenery changed dramatically, with a climb into the Serra do Caldeirão. The scent of eucalyptus infused the air, cork trees and olives mingled. Giant valleys among hills became vistas from mountains of red rock.

The road twisted and turned yet allowed easy driving: no huge climbs, hairpins, or steep drops. Along the way – amid the rain – tiny villages like Barranco do Velho and Vale da Rosa offered whitewashed dwellings and masses of walking trails. By the time I reached the aire at Ameixial, in the Serra do Malhão, the rain had drifted away, and I could sit outdoors to enjoy the farmyard sounds of the rural village mingled with a melodious chorus of church bells.

The hilly terrain of pine, wild figs and avenues of towering green and fragrant eucalyptus continued until Almodôvar. Then, suddenly, having crossed from the Algarve into Alentejo, the hills stopped. In place, a gentle landscape of grass plains to infinity, peppered with cork oaks, the occasional olive and many cattle.

In the distance, Castro Verde beamed, a hillside town of brilliant, whitewashed houses beneath red-tiled roofs, with its Royal Basilica dwarfing all else. In the Praça da República surrounding the basilica, tropical-coloured bougainvillea vied for attention alongside white houses laced with colour – pink, blue, green, and yellow – while park benches used exquisite, patterned tiles for backrests. I was 100km (62 miles) in.

At Aljustrel, I climbed to the Moinho (windmill) do Maralhas for a picnic with wide vistas over the town and the plains that stretched to the horizon. Soon after, Alcáçovas, where a sign pointed to a Chocalhos. "Mmm, a chocolate house", I thought, "That would be nice". How wrong I was, but gratefully so. Chocalhos are cowbells!

I grabbed the opportunity to visit the little workshop where these traditional cowbells are made. Such is concern over the loss of this historic industry that the bells are enshrined on the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Every bell is handmade and at the workshop were four men, each with a different role.

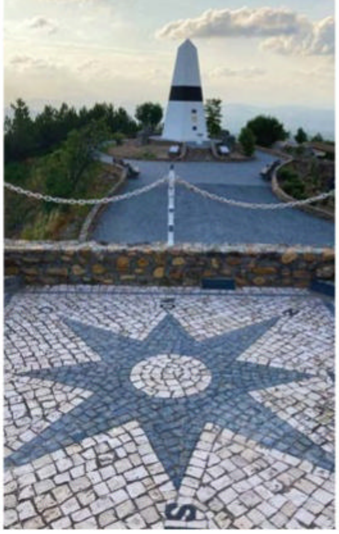
For a couple of days, I drifted off the N2 with good reason. The city of

MAIN PHOTO
Views north from Melriça, the hill marked as the geodesic centre of Portugal

TOP LEFT
Ameixial, an attractive village on the N2

ABOVE
The River Douro at Peso da Régua. Sadly, the town centre is not quite so attractive

BELOW
The 0km road marker post in Chaves



ABOVE
LEFT TO RIGHT
Casa de Mateus, the private home of the family behind the iconic Mateus wine brand

A pyramid marks the official geodesic centre of Portugal on the Melriça, just north of Vila de Rei

Faro Museum offers an insight into the Roman city within an attractive courtyard building

Évora is little more than a half-hour east of the N2, and there's a very pleasant campsite on the outskirts where I could pitch beneath the shade of eucalyptus trees. More so, the entire city, which has Roman origins yet with a collection of Megalithic dolmens hidden among woods to the west, is registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

A walk on the roof of the rose granite cathedral (reputedly the largest and most important church in Portugal from the sixteenth century) indicates why. This handsome town is ringed by monumental fortress walls, with a small core of cobbled streets. Balconied townhouses line bustling squares where parasols shelter al fresco diners from the Alentejo heat. There are art galleries, tiled churches, museums, the ruins of a Roman aqueduct and the remains of a Corinthian temple.

One day wasn't enough to appreciate Évora fully, but I'd a special day booked; it turned out to be the highlight of the road trip.

A little under 35km (21 miles) to the east of Évora is the town of Redondo. It's the beating heart of Alentejo's agricultural plains, surrounded by cork oak forest and vineyards that typify the landscape. Here, Philip and Margarida Mollet are the fifth generation of an Anglo-Portuguese family to manage a traditional *herdade*. The couple run cork forest experiences, offering trekking tours and 4x4 excursions through the vast estate of forest and vines.

With the sun blasting the grasslands, we drove in the vintage open-top Land Rover between the trees, viewing grazing cattle and spotting cork oaks stripped of their rejuvenating bark. Having climbed to the summit of the estate, with remarkable views over the Serra de Ossa, the guide explained about cork oak and the industry. It was fascinating. But then, so, too, was a visit to the winery and an explanation of Alentejo wines, with a tasting of the estate's own bottles.

The tour is completed with lunch at a local restaurant, selected personally by the Mollet family for an authentic experience serving traditional, regional food, including Iberian black pork, a local speciality.

Returning to the N2, I passed through Azaruja, the self-proclaimed centre of the cork industry. The cork harvest was arriving on small trucks, the stacks of curved bark creating asymmetrical patterns behind a sculpture that pays homage to the age-old profession of cork-stripping.

Before development of the motorway network, the N2 was the main route through Portugal.

✓ TOP TIP

The aire at Guest House Chaves is useful for daytime parking. However, it is on the side of a busy road, with little shade and felt slightly rundown. The campsite, south of the town and less than half a mile from the N2, is in a more pleasant, rural location with pitches beneath mature trees and clean facilities. Off season, the campsite was also cheaper than the aire

Now, the delight of the quiet touring route is discovering forgotten towns and villages along the way. Several offer the atmospheric ruins of an abandoned medieval fortress. That includes the huge castle complex at Montemor-o-Novo.

The ruins are free to wander around, providing a delightful hilltop walk showcasing the beauty of the surrounding landscape yet with interpretation panels to explain the history of the intra-mural village and its abandonment.

Back on the N2, the landscape continued to change, running alongside the River Sor to Ponte de Sor with its pretty riverside park. Now close to the northern boundary of the Alentejo region, gone were the cork and holm oaks, replaced by stumpy, fat pines.

A second fortress of the day, equally as impressive as the first, came at Abrantes. Like the first, it was free of charge to visit and offered fine views from its hilltop position, this time of the Rio Tejo (River Tagus), which ultimately flows through the capital, Lisbon. The castle was used by the Knights Templar as part of the twelfth century Tagus Line, having reconquered the land from the Moors. Inside the walls is the church of Santa Maria do Castelo, a supreme example of Portugal's highly ornamental

CARAVAN
CAMPING &
MOTORHOME
SHOW 2025

18-23 February
NEC Birmingham

STEP
inside & compare hundreds of new leisure vehicles

DISCOVER
staycation destinations & European campsites

EXPLORE
more campervans in a dedicated hall!

BUY
awnings, accessories & camping equipment

FREE
impartial help & advice from industry experts

THE UK'S LARGEST START OF SEASON
LEISURE VEHICLE & CAMPING SHOW

Buy your Show tickets today for just £12.50* using code CPV3

CCMSHOW.CO.UK

Parking Included. Kids go Free.*

Campervans ■ Motorhomes ■ Caravans ■ Tents ■ Trailer Tents ■ Awnings ■ Accessories

Organised by ncc events

Partners CARAVAN AND MOTORHOME CLUB; Camping and Caravanning Club

Tow Car Partner SUBARU

In Association with FIND MY LEISURE VEHICLE POWERED BY ncc

Terms and Conditions: *Tickets are £12.50 when booking before 23:59hrs 17/02/2025 after which tickets are £16.50; a £1.25 transaction fee applies to all online bookings, subject to availability. Children under 16 go free when accompanied by a paying ticket holder but will require a ticket (max. of 2 children per paying ticket holder). Tickets are non-refundable. Information correct at time of publication.

THE VIEWS ARE OUTSTANDING IN EVERY DIRECTION, WITH AN UNUSUAL RANGE OF HUMMOCKY MOUNDS, LIKE A COLOSSAL COLLECTION OF GIANT ANTHILLS

ABOVE LEFT The vineyards of the Alto Douro, where Douro and port wines are made. It's one of the most spectacular of vistas along the N2

ABOVE CENTRE Walking on the roof of the cathedral in Évora

ABOVE RIGHT Pitched beneath the shady eucalyptus trees at Évora Parque de Campismo

Manueline architecture, yet decorated with Moorish influences. Best, though, are the gardens below the fortress walls where formal flower borders and neatly clipped box hedges are softened by vivid bougainvillea and garish roses spilling over.

It was to another hilltop that I ventured next, the Melriça, which, at 591m, is the highest point in the area. The notable hill, a couple of miles north of Vila de Rei, has been officially declared as the central geodesic point of Portugal – midway north to south, and east to west. It's symbolised by a pyramid. The views are outstanding in every direction, but particularly to the north, where I was heading, with an unusual range of hummocky mounds, like a colossal collection of giant anthills through which I latterly ventured to reach my overnight stopping point at Sertã.

Once more the landscape changed, climbing the Alto da Louriceira, where mountainous pine forests stretched to the skyline. Then climbing more, into the Serra da Lousã where foxglove spikes patrolled the roadsides and heather bells carpeted the high moors. Descending to the Ceira Valley and the little town of Góis that spans the river, the feathery-leaved wattle took the place of pine. This attractive but invasive species showed its dominance, remaining all the way to Chaves.

I was still some way from Chaves, though, having passed the 300km (186 miles) post at Alvares, just a few kilometres south of Góis. First, I had to cross the River Mondego, a beautiful river that flows west through the university city of Coimbra to the Atlantic beaches at Figueira da Foz. The N2 runs alongside the river initially, with good views of the Penacova Library, a gorge with bizarre rock formations.

The river and its many reservoirs stayed in sight until Santa Comba Dão. Thereafter, while the mountainous landscape remains appealing, the N2 travels through a series of villages to Viseu.

It's a 15-minute walk into the centre of Viseu from the motorhome aire. The very attractive historic part of the city, which dates back 900 years, is, understandably, sited on a hill. Heavy rain halted my walk around the urban landscape; by morning, the downpour had created a fine mist.

Quiet, peaceful (and soggy), the twisting road north of Viseu cut through agreeable open countryside. The rain made the wayside lavender fresh and fragrant, growing wild beside giant, smooth granite boulders.

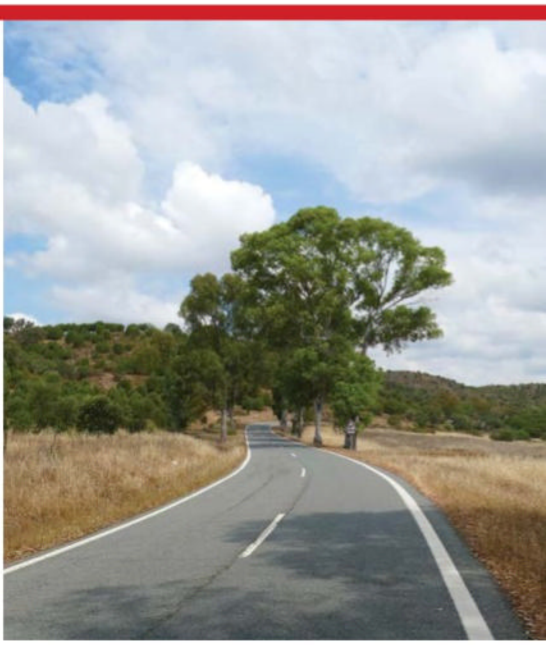
As I climbed north of Castro Daire towards the Montemuro mountains, the fine mist had become fog so dense I could not see more than 10 yards ahead. Deeming it too dangerous to continue the mountain route, I peeled off to take the motorway (A24) to Lamego. I'm so glad I did! Within half a mile, the fog cleared and the motorway, which climbs above the N2, afforded immense views both west, of the Serra de Montemuro, and east, the Serra de Leomil, of rocky

STAY AT

Aires in Ameixial, Serta, Viseu, Peso da Régua (all free of charge)

ÉVORA PARQUE DE CAMPISMO
Estrada da Alcáçovas, 7005-206
Évora
T 00 351 266 705190
W orbitur.pt/en/campsites/alentejo
OPEN All year

PARQUE DE CAMPISMO QUINTA DO REBENTÃO
Vila Nova de Veiga, 5400-764
Chaves
T 00 351 276 322733
W campismochaves.pt/en
OPEN All year



TOP LEFT
Part of the 'stairway to heaven' that reaches the pilgrim Santuário de Nossa Senhora dos Remédios, Lamego

TOP RIGHT
Once the principal road along the spine of Portugal, the N2 is now a quiet touring route, here travelling through the Algarve

INSET
Cherries on sale at Lamego

moorland smothered by intense yellow broom. It was the last of the wild landscapes. As I took the long descent to Lamego, a town carved up by deep valleys, terraced vineyards on steep mountainsides appeared.

A cherry festival was in progress when I arrived in the centre of this very attractive town. Cherry growers from the surrounding hills were selling the glossiest, plumpest fruits imaginable while squeezeboxes and washboards serenaded with percussive tunes. Lamego, though, is known for its 'staircase to heaven', a huge Baroque stairway that links the town centre with the pilgrim church, Santuário de Nossa Senhora dos Remédios. The highly ornamental staircase of 686 steps is divided by balconies, sculptures and tiled allegories that depict life's journey.

The N2 became a tortuous route as it curled around the mountainside on the descent to the River Douro, with astonishing views.

But for the surrounding scenery, its riverside aire and the attractive bridges that cross the river, Peso da Régua is unremarkable. As the centre of Douro wine and port production, the town receives lots of tourists climbing on board boats for trips along the river. But its tumble-down buildings don't do justice to the deliciousness of its wine.

However, if Peso da Régua is the low point of the Douro, physically and aesthetically, what came next was the high. I climbed out of town into the Alto Douro, by far the most elevated stretch of the N2. The UNESCO World Heritage Site designated landscape, of near-vertical vineyards and villages in dizzying valleys far below, was extraordinary as the road hairpinned up and then back down the mountains to Vila Real.

Here, I took the short diversion to Casa de Mateus, the family home of the Mateus empire. One could argue this is where mass tourism to Portugal began: a highly successful marketing campaign that turned Mateus Rosé, with its distinctive shaped bottle, into an iconic brand and one of the most popular wines in the 1970s. It introduced Portugal – in a glass – to thousands of British tourists looking for somewhere new to venture.

While visitors may wander the beautiful gardens, the museum vineyard of Portuguese grape varieties, and view the grounds of the eighteenth century palace at leisure, the sumptuous Baroque interior can only be viewed by guided tour.

Beyond Vila Real the route of the N2 straightens out with the valley of, first Corgo and latterly Tâmega rivers becoming ever wider and flatter. Chaves was in sight, the kilometre posts in single digits.

The old town is crumbling and needs investment (a very good reason to visit and inject cash into the local economy). Nonetheless, there is a charm to the ageing beauty of the historical centre, where colourful corrugated iron forms the walls of houses adorned by lacy balconies. Beneath the fortress walls and cannons that point towards the rocky hills, sits the town's renowned spa, and the River Tâmega that flows south to the Douro. So, too, the N2's 0km marker post.

As I approached on foot, a group of motorcyclists bade farewell to the post, which is daubed by fading stickers of previous venturers. They set off for Faro, 739km (458 miles) south. I'd have gladly joined them; they were in for a treat.

DALMATIAN DREAMS

It was 8am and we were already parked outside the entrance to the magical Plitvice Lakes and Waterfalls in northern Croatia. Not renowned for our early morning rising, today we had made an exception in order to enjoy, if only for the first couple of hours, the peace and beauty of one of Croatia's most iconic national parks. Our plan was to explore the upper lakes on day one and repeat the process for the lower lakes the next day, as a special deal through our campsite allowed two days' entrance for the price of one. To fully appreciate the beauty of the surroundings and allow time to slowly wander the many walkways that criss-cross around and over the lakes, with views of the waterfalls tumbling down into the clear water below, we fully recommend committing two days to the park.

A haven for wildlife, as we walked along the walkways, we listened to an orchestra of frogs croaking loudly from the reeds, while woodpeckers and cuckoos could be heard in the trees. We watched goosander diving ducks with young ducklings practising their skills, saw water snakes resting on logs and a fire salamander making its unhurried way across our path. We enjoyed the sense of space, of nature and of peace... for a little while!

As the morning progressed, tourist buses arrived and crocodile lines of people followed their umbrella-waving tour guides along the boardwalks and joined long queues for the boats that transported them

MAIN PICTURE
A view of Pag town and the Velebit mountains

Enjoy the glorious scenery on a road trip along the Croatia coast

Words & pictures ▌Gill Bonell & Martin Smith

ABOVE RIGHT TOP TO BOTTOM
St Donatus Church and the campanile of St Anastasia Cathedral, Zadar

Iconic waterfall in Krka Park

A relaxing spot, Tisno

across Lake Kozjak, so we were glad we had set out early. Falling into the lower lakes is Croatia's highest waterfall, which is best seen from a trail above the canyon. When the sun appeared, the turquoise blue of the water was a vision to behold!

Heading for the coast a few days later, we drove along quiet roads which wound through a land of wooded hills and pastures, all a lush spring green, and through villages where individual houses stood in their own plots, often with an area for cultivating food. Tourism is increasing in Croatia (it's the fastest-rising European holiday destination of the last 10 years) and many homes provide accommodation. On the coast, campsites are plentiful, ranging from large scale to small, family-run sites in private gardens. We found the facilities at all our sites to be excellent and very clean.

Croatia's rocky shoreline has almost 80 islands. From our first coastal site, at Seget Vranjica, we travelled by boat to the old 'museum town' of Trogir, situated on a tiny island in between the mainland and the island of Čiovo. Trogir is now a photogenic tourist magnet with cafés, coffee shops and restaurants filling every nook and cranny, a foodie's paradise! Within the central square, we listened to a traditional klapa (Dalmatian a cappella) choir, before wandering through the cobbled alleyways and along the seafront promenade.

Back at the campsite, we went snorkelling but were surprised at the

> ON THE COAST, CAMPSITES ARE PLENTIFUL, RANGING FROM LARGE SCALE TO SMALL, FAMILY-RUN SITES IN PRIVATE GARDENS

TOP LEFT
The Old Port, Dubrovnik

TOP RIGHT
Church of Our Lady of Health, Zadar

lack of aquatic life we found.

Apart from some sea cucumbers, weird creatures that keep the seabed clean, and numerous sea urchins, the underwater environment was disappointingly sterile. All the beaches along Croatia's beautiful coast are pebbly. The more popular are artificially topped with a sand-coloured gravel, which, along with the risk of stepping on the many prickly sea urchins along the shoreline, meant we found it more comfortable and safer to wear water shoes on the beaches.

OUR 'VAN

Gill Bonell and Martin Smith enjoy travelling across Europe for six weeks at a time in their 2018 Ford Transit Custom SWB high-top, a high-spec self-converted campervan, bespoke to their needs. Wherever they are, it is perfect for enabling them to hike, cycle, snorkel or just wander...

We took the scenic D8 coastal road to Dubrovnik on a cloudy, sunless day, so although a lovely drive, we could not appreciate the amazing colours and scenery of the coast until we returned along the same road a few days later, when the views were absolutely glorious!

After the Homeland War of the early 1990s, travellers heading south along the coast needed to cross the international border between Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, into the Neum Corridor, a narrow strip of land connecting Bosnia-Herzegovina to the sea, before crossing the border again on the other side, back into the semi-enclave of southeastern Croatia.

In 2022, a majestic new suspension bridge south of Ploče was opened which allowed us uninterrupted travel from central Croatia across to the Pelješac peninsula and on down to Dubrovnik. We settled on a campsite on the outskirts from where there was easy access to the old town by bus (every 15 mins at a cost of €2.)

The following day we wandered around the inside of the old city, getting our bearings. Dubrovnik has been governed by various powers over the course of history and has also been an independent city state. It was damaged by an earthquake in 1667 and so many buildings were rebuilt after this. The attack on Dubrovnik during the Homeland War has left its mark in places as bullet damage can be seen, but the city was quickly repaired and a 'sea' of new red tiles can be observed as you look from the city walls across the rooftops.

We bought a 'Dubrovnik Pass' on our second day (only available online) which gave access to the magnificent city walls and several interesting museums, as well as travel on the local buses. We made good use of this by arriving early and walking around the city walls before visiting the museums. Catching the bus back to the campsite was an experience in itself, it was 'every man for himself', which meant that, despite being the first to arrive at the stop, we were the last on board!

Retracing our route along the coastal road, we had lunch at Slano in its pretty bay, one of many settlements that dot the coast, before going slightly inland through the Neretva Delta (Valley of Life) where a variety of crops are grown, including oranges, already ripe on

the trees in May! Fruit sellers lined the roads on some stretches. We stopped for a couple of nights at Zaostrog, a quiet coastal village, at a site alongside the beach next to a Franciscan monastery, and spent a quiet day snorkelling and relaxing by the sea.

Travelling on, we lunched at Podgora and then stopped at Omiš, an old pirate stronghold at the end of the Cetina Gorge. We walked into the old town and followed a path up to thirteenth century Peovica, the lower of two fortresses set in the rocks. Steep stone steps lead up to the tower then the roof is accessed by a ladder, giving great views across the town and river below.

Continuing along the coast road, we drove past Split, the largest city after the capital, Zagreb. Although recommended as a destination, suburbia has crept along the shore on either side of Split and the traffic was heavy, so instead we stopped for a walk at Marina, a quiet 'yachty' town. It was there we saw our first land snake. Long and thin, it was as surprised as us by the encounter and whipped along the pavement and over a wall at a tremendous pace!

The coastal road continued to be delightful before turning inland towards the Krka National Park.

BOTTOM LEFT
Onofrio's Large Fountain (part of an elaborate water system)

BOTTOM RIGHT
Omiš from Peovica Fortress

INSET
A damselfly in Krka Park

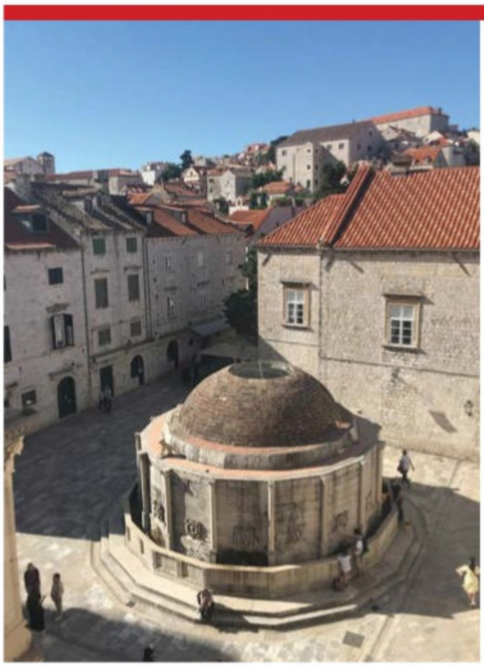
From Camp Krka, we made an early start the next morning, in order to avoid the tourist buses again. We parked at the Lozovac entrance (free parking) and, although there was a bus provided, walked down to the start of the trail around the Skradinski Buk waterfalls, which were beautiful.

As at Plitvice, the loud croaking of frogs 'ribbited' out from amongst the reeds, whilst clouds of emerald green and deep blue damselflies danced above the water. We saw a European pond turtle sunbathing on a floating log and watched as a Hermann's tortoise ambled through the grass. At Skradinski Buk are the disused buildings of Europe's first hydroelectric plant, built in 1895, and an old water mill, historically used for washing locally produced cloth as well as for grinding wheat and corn. From the waterfalls we followed a track along the river to Skradin, a riverside town on the edge of the park, and then caught the Krka National Park ferry (included in the ticket price) back to the falls.

FIND OUT MORE

- Vaccination for tick-borne encephalitis is recommended for camping/hiking in Croatia. We arranged this through our GP surgery's travel vaccinations service, for a fee
- It is not uncommon for Croatian Traffic Police to pull you over to check your documents. This happened to us and the officers appeared to enjoy having a friendly chat in English, a language that all children learn at school from a young age
- Plitvice Lakes National Park
  W np-plitvicka-jezera.hr/en
- Krka National Park
  W np-krka.hr/en_US
- Dubrovnik Pass
  W dubrovnikpass.com

Apart from loud thunder above us one night, Camp Krka was peaceful and we enjoyed a quiet day before heading off to Tisno, a sleepy town straddled either side of a rising bridge to the island of Murter. Cycling from the campsite, we enjoyed beautiful views in peace and quiet until we were passed by a rally of 150 Vespa



✔ TOP TIPS

- We get reduced rates at campsites with our ACSI card but we still found the costs to be higher than in other countries we have visited

- Tickets for Krka Park via Skradin can be bought from the visitor centre, but the car parks here are private, so this is an additional cost. There are a number of small car parks with attendants as you enter the town with signs saying they are 'Official' but you might prefer the large one near the quay!

scooters winding their way along our path under the trees!

Snorkelling first thing the following morning before the wind picked up, we watched fish swimming above meadows of eel grass, a delicate and vulnerable environment. We dried off in the sun before some bad weather came in, bringing thunder, lightning and heavy rain, which stayed with us for 24 hours.

Despite the inclement weather, next morning we moved on a little further up the coast to Drage and a campsite in a lovely situation which had facilities enabling campers to bring, launch and moor their boats, as this is a good base for visiting the Kornati islands. We had previously owned a sailing boat and it brought back happy memories of sailing holidays, but we wouldn't swap our 'van back!

We were up the next day for another early dip and were pleased to see more fish here around the rocky bay, along with large red spiky starfish. Then back at the 'van, chaffinches and turtle doves chattered and cooed in the trees around us and occasionally ventured down to investigate if there were crumbs to be found.

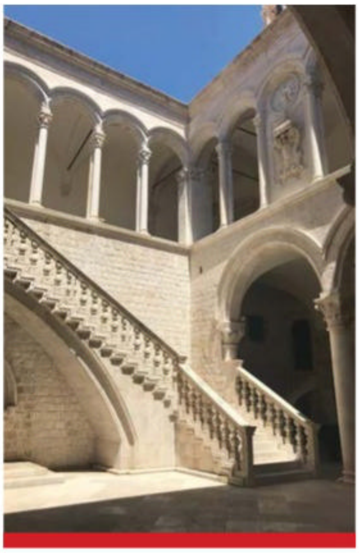
Heading off again, we stopped at a resort campsite on the outskirts of Zadar. In the evening we strolled around the coast, admiring the views across the water to the old town. Zadar is a mixture of old and new, with ancient and medieval historic buildings plus modern installations such as the 'Sea Organ' and the 'Greeting to the Sun' providing sound and light effects to accompany the sunset over the sea.

And then for something completely different: Pag island. Cross-country from Zadar, the drive was lovely. A quiet road took us through lush countryside with the Velebit mountains ahead of us.

Crossing the arch bridge to Pag, the landscape transformed into a barren, but eerily beautiful 'moonscape'. As we approached Pag town, Salt Pans lined the road in the valley and then the road wound up into the hills above Pag, where the views were surprisingly spectacular. Heading north up the Lun peninsula, we stopped at a small, family-run campsite on the contrastingly green and more fertile western side, nestled into a small bay below a grove of olive trees. Here we enjoyed a lazy couple of days, snorkelling around the rocks, relaxing on the little beach and exploring the local area by foot.

All too soon it was time to head back to the mainland and so we returned to the desolate lunar scenery of the eastern shore to catch the Žigljen to Prizna car ferry. Then, turning north, we followed the coastal road, soaking up the exceptionally beautiful views of the Kvarner islands on one side and the mountains of the Velebit on the other until we reached Rijeka, on the border with Slovenia and the start of our long drive home.

RIGHT
Inside the Rector's Palace (seat of government), Dubrovnik



BELOW
Fort Lovrijenac, Dubrovnik

INSET
Leaving Pag on the Žigljen to Prizna car ferry

STAY AT

CAMPING KORANA
47245 Rakovica, Čatrnja 167
T **00385 53 751888**
W **np-plitvicka-jezera.hr/en**
OPEN **1 April – 31 October**

AMADRIA PARK CAMPING TROGIR
Kralja Zvonimira 62, 21218 Seget Vranjica
T **00385 21 798228**
W **amadriaparkcamping.com**
OPEN **All year**

CAMP KRKA
Skocici 2, 22221 Lozovac
T **00385 22 778495**
W **camp-krka.hr/en/**
OPEN **1 March – 31 October**

MAKING MEMORIES
Jordans
LEISURE
MILE BY MILE

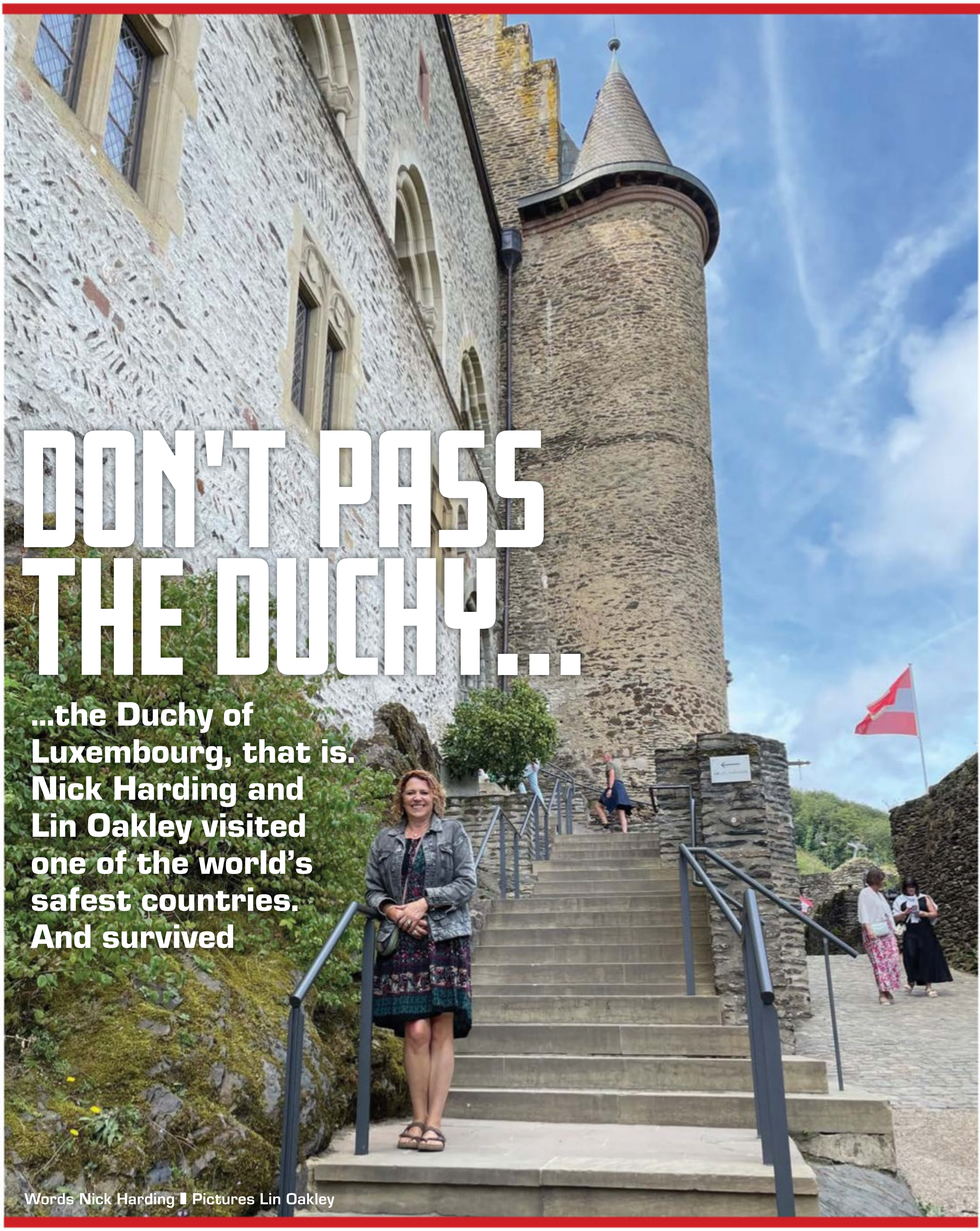
BRINGING FAMILIES TOGETHER *for* UNFORGETTABLE ROAD TRIPS

- Extensive range of vehicles
- Both new & pre-owned options
- Habitation checks and MOTs
- Campervan conversions
- Trusted family-run business
- Expert Advice

AUTO TRAIL · bravia mobil · GLOBE-TRAVELLER · Hobby · VICTORY CONVERSIONS

Visit our Yorkshire showroom at 45-52 Witham, Hull HU9 1BS

www.jordanscars.co.uk ☎ 01482 222500



DON'T PASS THE DUCHY...

...the Duchy of Luxembourg, that is. Nick Harding and Lin Oakley visited one of the world's safest countries. And survived

Words Nick Harding ▌ Pictures Lin Oakley

Off the beaten track? Not really. But poor little Luxembourg is just the sort of country that gets overlooked when you're planning any kind of campervan trip. Frankly, there's no reason why. It's lovely. Packed with history, great roads, good campsites and not up itself in any way.

Forget any jibes about Luxembourg being France without the culture, here is a country that's more than at ease with itself, also boasting plenty that keeps it in competition with its better-known neighbours. Castles and rivers, luscious countryside, Luxembourg wines are pretty good, too (thanks mainly to the Mosel Valley). All topped off with a free public transport network (buses, trains and trams).

How does Luxembourg measure up? It's about 1% of the size of the UK, or just a bit bigger than Greater London, albeit with a population of less than a tenth of the UK's largest conurbation. Officially, it's the seventh smallest state in Europe.

Landlocked it may be – as well as Belgium and France, Luxembourg shares a border with Germany – but it's all very easy to get to by campervan. It was around four hours' driving, all rather uneventful, from Calais ferry port through France and Belgium before we reached our first campsite, Camping Gritt, on the banks of the River Sûre, near the village/small town of Ingeldorf. It's at the southern end of the Éislek region in the north of the country, bordering Mullerthal and Guttland (which boasts the Valley of the Seven Castles). Also, there's Minett, right down in the southwest corner, where the whole region is a UNESCO biosphere reserve.

Éislek is known for its forests and valleys, definitely a place to go for serious walking. The Escapardenne and Lee trails (the latter the first section of the former) are deemed to be Best of Europe – Leading Quality Trails.

We kept our walking to a minimum, mainly because we arrived at Camping Gritt early evening and, once set up on our completely level hardstanding pitch towards the end of the site, took the stroll back to reception to order our fresh bread and croissants for the next morning, grabbing a Diekirch beer in the evening sun on the *terrasse* of the restaurant. Then, despite plans for a walk over the bridge and into Ingeldorf, the on-site restaurant provided sufficient attraction for us to go indoors for a light meal – salads, etc – before heading off to bed on what seemed to be a remarkably quiet site considering how full it appeared. The nearby River Sûre might have contributed to that feeling of calm, and I'm happy to report there was no evidence of mosquitoes during our stay.

Not only are the buses free across Luxembourg, they also have right of way when pulling out. So, for our first full day in the duchy we went to Vianden, taking the bus just across the water from the campsite (thanks to the friendly site staff who had pointed us in the right direction the evening before). It proved about half an hour away on a pleasantly meandering route that took us through unspoilt countryside as well as smaller settlements.

You'll go a long way to find a town as pretty and unspoilt as Vianden, or a castle ditto (can you call a castle pretty?). Perched high, you can walk up or grab the chairlift. We did the latter – mainly because chairlifts are not something we usually encounter on our travels – and were rewarded with some spectacular scenery on

MAIN PICTURE
On the steps at Vianden Castle

ABOVE LEFT TO RIGHT
Looking out for the bus

Larking around in Vianden

Camping at Nommerlayen

USEFUL INFO

- Nick and Lin booked their tour of Luxembourg via the Overseas Holidays department of the Caravan and Motorhome Club. As well as links to over 300 sites across 15 different European countries (three in Luxembourg), the Club offers not just a full sites and ferries booking service, but also travel insurance, advice and more.
The Caravan and Motorhome Club is also the owner of the otherwise independent Alan Rogers Travel operator and sites inspection service, which has links to 60 sites across Luxembourg alone.

- More at **caravanclub.co.uk/overseas-holidays** and **alanrogers.com**

✔ FIND OUT MORE

- Start your visit right here
W visitluxembourg.com
- Putting the 'van into Vianden
W vianden-castle.com
- Make a break for the city
W luxembourg-city.com
- Find out about the food
W luxembourg.public.lu/en

the way up as well as down.

From the top of the chairlift's journey, there's a choice of 600m or 1,800m (that's metres) walks – tricky or easier – to get to the castle itself. We took the latter – a bit of a scramble in some places but no problem, although worse weather than the mild, dry and calm conditions on the day might make it more testing.

If the views on the chairlift approach were magnificent, Vianden Castle happily matches them. The town below grew up as a result of the castle, which dates back to its time as a Roman outpost, with the buildings as we know them today being constructed from the eleventh century – there's also evidence of a dwelling here from Merovingian times (ie the fifth century). Fast-forward to the state takeover of the ruins of Castle Vianden in 1977, followed by a complete restoration project throughout the 1980s and its present-day imposing magnificence.

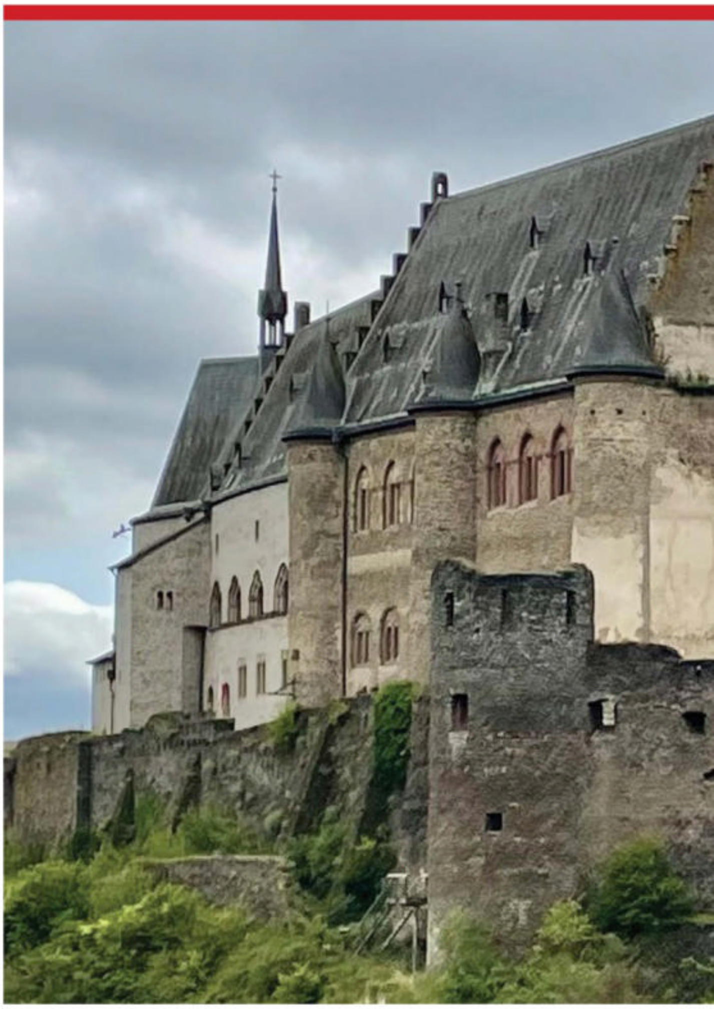
Needless to say, in its heyday it held quite the position of power. Various counts of Vianden had close connections to the royal family of France as well as Germany's imperial court. And in World War Two it played its part in Luxembourg's Resistance, seeing off a German invasion.

We were able to marvel at a considerable array of rooms – from the arms hall to the kitchens, lower chapel, crypt, knights' study, even the wine cellar.

What we missed we caught up on in the information centre, café and gift shop before heading back down and wandering around the town before settling in one of the bars alongside the River Our for a late afternoon Diekirch beer – although by now we'd learned to ask for the tastier, dark version.

Diekirch itself may not have been a town we found time to visit, but we can happily vouch for its eponymous beers (and there's a beer museum to visit). Brasserie de Luxembourg is reckoned to be Luxembourg's second-largest brewer; it was taken over by American giant, Anheuser-Busch InBev, in 2020. The biggest is Brasserie Nationale which, as far as I know, remains independent. There are around a dozen craft brewers, but they'll take a bit of searching out. Do you prefer wine? Head for the Moselle region.

As for Vianden, it also has connections with French writer, playwright, poet, Victor Hugo (of *Les Misérables* and more fame). He lived in the town, albeit briefly and



ABOVE
Vianden Castle

LEFT
A quiet Vianden street

Beer o'clock

INSET
Victor Hugo statue in Vianden

LUXEMBOURG IS LOVELY. PACKED WITH HISTORY, GREAT ROADS, GOOD CAMPSITES AND NOT UP ITSELF IN ANY WAY

periodically, putting the rest of his family in a nearby hotel while renting a room to work in – the latter is now a museum telling the story of his times in the town. Outside, meanwhile, there's a bronze bust of the great man right by Vianden's main bridge. There's also the Victor Hugo viewpoint, which is said to be the inspiration for some of his paintings. And, yes, of course he painted the castle.

If you're castle-minded, also near Camping Gritt are Bourscheid, overlooking the Sûre valley; Wiltz, home to two museums – the Art of Brewing and Battle of the Bulge; and Clervaux, which has the Family of Man permanent photo exhibition as well as its own Battle of the Bulge Museum (such is the importance of this World War Two massacre throughout not just Luxembourg but also Belgium). Yes, Luxembourg does a good line in castles.

There's also Upper Sûre Lake, supplier of drinking water and electricity to much of the area but also the place to go to seek out swimming, canoeing, diving, windsurfing, sailing and solar boat sailing activities.

If Camping Gritt found favour for its clean, modern facilities and altogether fuss-free nature, our second site, Europacamping Nommerlayen, made an instant impression – even though we didn't arrive until early evening. It's immense, not just in terms of pitches, but also facilities, ranging from a swimming complex that includes a 50m part-open-air pool (it has a sliding roof), bowling, sauna, fitness rooms and all kinds of sports opportunities. Also, the main wash block includes the option to have your own shower/bathrooms in one building styled along the lines of a Greek temple (no kidding).

Nearby Nommerlayen Forest is lovely for just plain and simple walking (bike hire is also available from the campsite). Again, we couldn't resist the on-site restaurant. Again we were very impressed.

We were in the Mullerthal region now, also known as Little Switzerland due to its hilly landscape. Nommerlayen lists a good variety of other local attractions beyond what's on the site itself.

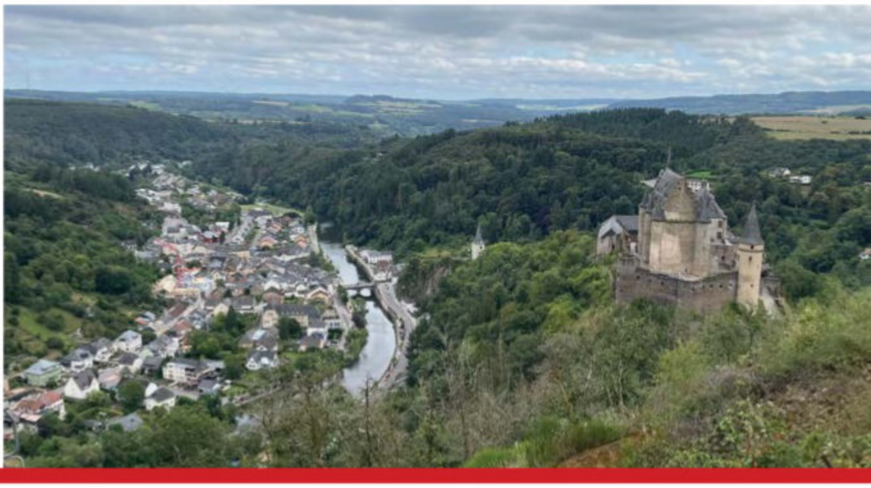
So, a quick rundown of places we would have visited if we hadn't run out of time would start with the medieval city of Echternach and its Museum of the Abbey Echternach. Also its lake (for walking and on-water activities). And, of course, its free-admission Roman villa.

There are, of course, castles here, too. Larochette, and Beaufort, where there are two (yes, two) – medieval and next-door neighbour renaissance. The latter offers guided tours only, but it also provides the opportunity to sample its very own Casséro liqueur.

But it's actually water that prevails in the Mullerthal region. You'll want to look out for both the Schiessentümpel Waterfall and the Aquatower Berdorf.

TOP RIGHT Spectacular chairlift views

INSET Examining art in Vianden Castle



Oh, and a shoutout to manager, Tom, at Nommerlayen campsite, for customer service that went well beyond the call. He was still in contact with us three days after we arrived home – all because we managed to lose a small shoulder bag; sentimental value only, but the way staff were put on alert just in case it was spotted somewhere on site was very impressive.

As you've probably guessed, nothing is too far away when you're in Luxembourg. Even its capital city – somewhat confusingly also called Luxembourg. Despite a handful of visits to the country now, we've never quite managed to catch up on its main city – the attractions of its old town, the Bock Casemates tunnels network, Grand Ducal Palace, the souvenir shops of the Place d'Armes and even the Pfaffenthal Panoramic Elevator and Knippercher chocolates will have to wait for next time, perhaps.

There's lots more that makes Luxembourg (the country) as interesting as it is easy. Currency is the euro, there are no road tolls to worry about, fuel (diesel) tends to be a bit cheaper than other European states, officially they speak French and German here but English seems to be widespread (luckily for us, with our merest splatterings of the former two). Dare I say, also, small enough to do in a week? Actually, more. It wasn't until near the end of our stay that we picked up a very handy booklet, titled *100 Things To Do In Luxembourg*, some 20 of them in Luxembourg city. The rest? Well, the likes of the Graffiti Tour of Ettelbruck, Ramborn Cider Haff (the country's first-ever cider producer, apparently), National Museum of Resistance and Human Rights, Parc Merveilleux (Fairytale Park) and more certainly caught the eye.

Hôtel Victor Hugo

However long you intend to stay, you might want to look at what the Luxembourg Card offers in terms of free or reduced-price admissions to some 80 attractions – museums, art galleries, castles, palaces, sport and leisure – throughout the country. You can purchase them for just the one day, or more.

Our stay in Luxembourg this time around (there have been others) may have been cut short, but that's because we were en route to two other great European touring destinations – Austria and Slovenia. But any nation that can win the Eurovision Song Contest (five times, indeed) deserves our respect, surely?

ABOVE LEFT
Café culture in Luxembourg

ABOVE RIGHT
The view over Vianden

INSET
Coffee at Hotel Victor Hugo

BELOW RIGHT
The castle overlooking the River Our

WHERE TO STAY

CAMPING GRITT
2, Um Gritt, L-9161 Ingeldorf
T 00352 691 319414
W campinggritt.lu
OPEN 1 March – 29 November

EUROPACAMPING NOMMERLAYEN
99 Rue Nommerlayen, 7465 Nommern
T 00352 878078
W nommerlayen-ec.lu
OPEN 11 April – 2 November

CORNWALL

Heligan
CARAVAN & CAMPING
★★★★★

Escape into the heart of the Cornish countryside

Discover More
heligancampsite.co.uk
info@heligancampsite.com | 01726 842 714
Heligan Caravan and Camping Park | Pengrugla | Cornwall | PL26 6EL

CORNWALL

PENTEWAN Sands
HOLIDAY PARK
★★★★★

Cornwall's 5 Star Holiday Park on the Beach

Discover More
www.pentewan.co.uk
01726 843 485 | info@pentewan.co.uk
Pentewan, Saint Austell, Cornwall, PL26 6BT

DEVON

Rest and Relax in the heart of North Devon whilst escaping from the demands of everyday life and making memoires to last a life time.

Smytham
Holiday Park

Call us on 01805 622110
or visit smytham.co.uk

DEVON

Whitehill
Country Park

Countryside holidays by the sea
Paignton, South Devon

Holiday Caravans ▲ Lodges ▲
Touring ▲ Camping ▲ Pods
Dogs Welcome

Call us **01803 782338** Visit & book online **whitehill-park.co.uk**

PREMIER
PARKS 2025

The finest UK campsites, independently assessed
premier-parks.co.uk

DORSET

St Leonards Farm
Caravan and Camping Park

STORAGE NOW AVAILABLE AT £875 PER YEAR

Ringwood Rd, West Moors, Ferndown, Dorset BH22 0AQ

Peaceful, level well drained site near Bournemouth. Electric hook-ups, shower and toilet block, hard standing pitches available. New storage spaces available for Motorhomes & Caravans available now!
Permanent Holiday Static Caravans for Sale fully sited. Storage spaces & seasonal pitches.
01202 872637 • enquiries_stleonards@yahoo.co.uk
www.stleonardsfarmpark.com

OVERSEAS ADVENTURES

Broaden your horizons and head across the water with your campervan for a European escape

Words Claire Tupholme

CAMPING SIENA COLLEVERDE

Strada di Scacciapensieri 47, 53100 Siena, Italy
T 0039 577 334080
W sienacamping.com
OPEN 1 March – 5 November

Camping Siena Colleverde lies close to the Tuscan city of Palio with the hills of Chianti behind. Pitches have panoramic countryside views and come with electric hook-up. For convenience there is a service point for fresh and waste water, along with toilets and showers, a laundry, shop and dedicated dog exercise area. Other facilities include a shop, restaurant, pizzeria and takeaway. The on-site bar is open from Easter until the end of October, and the outdoor seasonal swimming pool is beautifully surrounded by trees.

For exploring the area there is a handy bus service from the site gates and the train station is only a mile away. With the beautiful city of Siena just one and a half miles away, it's easy to explore the historic centre that has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Here you will find a Romanesque-Gothic cathedral and a Gothic style town hall and dominating tower.

Nikolaus Bader/Pixabay

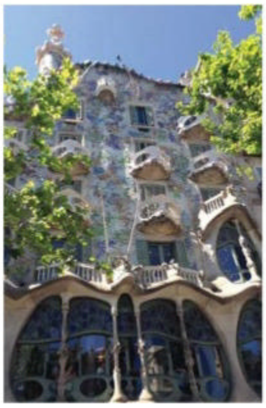
CAMPING TRES ESTRELLAS

Carretera C-31, km. 186,2, Autovía de Castelldefels
08850 Gavà,Barcelona, Spain
T 0034 936 330637
W tresestrellascampings.com/en/barcelona
OPEN 1 March – 31 December

Camping Tres Estrellas is situated in Gavà, seven and a half miles from Barcelona. The cosmopolitan and bustling city is home to many remarkable features, including extravagant buildings by Gaudi, imaginative food and vibrant street life. Frequent buses run to and from Barcelona, dropping off in Gavà, including a night bus, and the station is only 300 metres from the campsite.

Facilities on site include an outdoor pool and children's pool, two restaurants, a bar, shop and barbecue area. There are pitches with electric and also fully serviced ones that have the addition of water and drainage. The campsite also offers tickets to Barcelona attractions including a hop-on hop-off city bus tour and entry into the famous La Sagrada Familia church.

With average Celsius temperatures in the mid to late teens, when back in the UK they'd be lucky to hit 10°C, Barcelona is also a great option to visit in the winter months.



photosforyou/Pixabay

CHATEAU DE LACOMTE COUNTRY CLUB

46500 Carlucet, Lot, France
T 0033 565 387546
W campinglacomte.com
OPEN 1 June – 15 September

Château de Lacomte is a four-star tranquil hideaway for adults only within picturesque, natural surroundings. This British-owned country club is set in an ancient region steeped in rich and colourful history. Days out exploring can include imposing châteaux and picturesque medieval towns and villages. The site also delights nature lovers with the 30-acre estate home to swallowtail butterflies, three species of woodpecker, and in June many rare orchids.

The site has fully serviced pitches surrounded by flowering shrubs and trees. Facilities include toilets and showers, a laundry room, washing-up sinks and accesible facilities. For recreation, you'll love the outdoor pool, tennis court and fields for basketball and volleyball. There is also a lounge bar on site and restaurant, Les Etoiles, where you can savour culinary delights and dine al fresco on the terrace.

Rolf/stock.adobe.com

CAMPING URBAN GARDENS BLAARMEERSEN

Campinglaan 16, 9000 Ghent, Belgium
T 0032 93 969392
W urban-gardens.be/en/ghent
OPEN All year

Camping Urban Gardens Blaarmeersen has a lakeside setting, in a sports and recreation centre on the outskirts of Ghent. The city's historical centre, noted for its twelfth-century Gravensteencastle, is three miles away and easily accessible by bike or public transport.

Pitches are a minimum size of 80 square metres with 10 A electric and set in paddocks of 10. There are 48 hardstandings and there is a motorhome service point on site. There are four toilet and shower blocks on site and a laundry, shop and restaurant.

With the site being spread around the city of Ghent's leisure complex you have easy access to a swimming lake, a lakeside beach, fishing, watersports, play areas, a multi-sports court and cycle hire. There are also bars, restaurants and cafés nearby, along with a shop and restaurant on site.

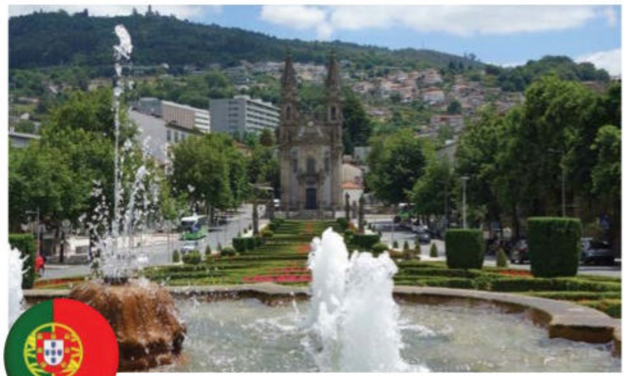
CAMPING SAINTE CLAIRE

Neufchâtel-en-Bray, France
19 Rue Grande Flandre, 76270 Neufchâtel-en-Bray, France
T 0033 235 930393
W camping-sainteclaire.com
OPEN 1 April – 15 October

Camping Sainte Claire is located in the pretty setting of an old farmhouse, bordered by the river and close to an 'Avenue Verte' – a 25-mile route that is perfect for walking or for cycling along the old railway line.

The site has 100 pitches and electric hook-up is available. There are toilets and showers, a laundry, and WiFi across the site, along with a seasonal grocery shop. It is a five-minute walk to local supermarkets and a shopping area. There is also a campsite brewery open during the main season, with food served in the dining room or on the terrace.

Should you wish to visit this area in the winter months there is also a 14-pitch self-service aire that forms part of this site and is open all year.



PARQUE DE CAMPISMO DA PENHA

Penha, Costa, 4810-025 Guimaraes, Portugal
T 00351 253 515912
W turipenha.pt
OPEN 3 April – 31 October

This hilltop campsite sits just below the summit of the historic and religious site of Penha, and high above the World Heritage Site of Guimaraes. The old city has many attractive streets and squares lined with cafés and restaurants. At the northern end the Ducal Palace and castle are powerful reminders of the city's past significance. The quickest way to get here is to take the cable car from the summit of Penha, or it's a 15-minute drive.

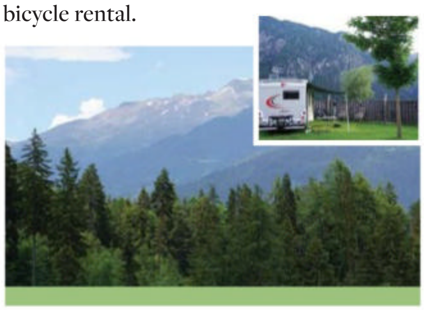
Pitches on site have electric hook-up and are terraced and shaded. Facilities include toilets, showers, an outdoor pool and a small bar/restaurant. On the doorstep is the historic and religious hilltop of Penha. There are a number of significant chapels scattered among the boulders, together with a couple of restaurants. In Guimaraes, there's also a railway station with regular services to the coastal city of Porto.

COMFORT CAMPING FALKEN

Falkenweg 7, A-9900 Lienz, Austria
T 0043 664 4107973
W camping-falken.com
OPEN 1 April – 31 October

Located on the southern outskirts of Lienz with a view of the Lienz Dolomites and just a 10-minute walk from the old town centre and pedestrian zone. In the nearby mountain range there is plenty of walking to be had, from relaxing strolls to more serious hiking. There are stunning views and plenty of wildlife to look out for, too. If you prefer less exertive activities then there are plenty of museums and buildings to explore, especially in the Roman town of Aguntum (it's a 10-minute drive or around four miles by bike or on foot).

The site has standard, premium and extra-large pitches. There are three toilet and shower blocks, a mini market and bar, a playground, table tennis, dog shower and laundry room. You can treat yourself to the sauna, steam bath and relaxation rooms on site, too. Camping Falken is five minutes' walk from indoor and outdoor pools and the site also offers electric car hire and bicycle rental.



Orange
CAMPERS

BRAND NEW *luxury* MWB MODEL

BRAND NEW
FIAT DUCATOS
AVAILABLE NOW!

ALSO AVAILABLE AS A
HIGH ROOF OPTION!

Layout option 2

Rear kitchen w/ 2 single beds joining into
a double bed plus electric flush toilet

TAKE
THE TOUR:

FIND
OUT MORE:

CAMPSITE FINDER

out&about LIVE

Discover your inner outdoors

BEACH DAYS
BEST DAYS

outandaboutlive.co.uk

RIBE CAMPING

Ribe, Denmark
Farupvej 2, 6760 Ribe, Denmark
T 0045 75 410777
W ribecamping.dk
OPEN All year

Located within the Wadden Sea National Park, a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site, you can easily visit Denmark's oldest town, Ribe, from here and sightsee the local wildlife. There are many shops, cafés and restaurants in the town's small streets and pedestrian area.

There's a specific area on site with pitches on gravel with an attached grass or wooden terrace area and some pitches are surrounded by beech hedges. The site also has a 'quickstop' area, where you can pitch up from 8pm until 10am with use of the toilets, access to fresh water and waste water disposal, but no electric hook-up.

Site facilities include a heated outdoor pool with a slide and a morning swim exclusively for adults, a café that has direct access to the swimming pool, table tennis, a playground, a shop, large family bathrooms, a laundry room, dog exercise area and a dog shower, toilets and showers.

CAMPING SANDAYA LES JARDINS DE PRIVAS

Chemin du camping, 07000 Privas, France
T 0033 411 329000
W en.ardechecamping.fr/the-campsite
OPEN 18 April – 21 September

Les Jardins de Privas offers is set within a wooded estate, in Privas, capital of the Ardèche region. Each grass pitch is a minimum of 100 metres square and shaded by trees. Pitches have access to 10A electric, grey and black waste water disposal, a fresh water supply, and three toilet/shower blocks.

Recreational facilities include a covered heated pool and an outdoor pool. There's a football pitch, playground, boules area and table tennis tables, and a small river runs the length of the site. For meals and snacks you can take advantage of the restaurant, snack bar or takeaway.

CAMPINGPLATZ LÜBECK-SCHÖNBÖCKEN

Steinrader Damm 12, 23556 Lübeck, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany
T 0049 451 893090
W en.camping-luebeck.de
OPEN 31 March – 31 October

This campsite is on the outskirts of the city of Lübeck which is fascinating to explore, with numerous historical buildings and churches in the old town. It's also famous for Lübeck marzipan – a must-try while in the city!

There is a bus service from just outside the site giving easy access and also the option to dine out in the city centre. Or you can use a cycle path to visit Lübeck, too. The gates of the old town of Lübeck are just two and a half miles from the campsite.

Pitches at Lübeck-Schönböcken are on grass with electric hook-up. There are toilet and shower facilities, a laundry room, and a small kiosk selling essentials where you can also order bread rolls for breakfast.

For a day out option, the Baltic Sea resort of Travemünde is less than 16 miles away. Here you'll find a vast beach and many seafood restaurants along the banks of the Trave River.

SPEEDS CAMPERS

THE UK'S LARGEST STOCKIST OF FORD CUSTOM CAMPERS FOR SALE

ADVENTURER
SPEEDS

TRY BEFORE YOU BUY WITH ONE OF OUR RENTAL CAMPERVANS

WWW.SPEEDSCAMPERS.CO.UK
E: SALES@SPEEDSCAMPERS.CO.UK
T: 01494 512 525

OFF GRID POWER SOLUTIONS

Camping, Caravan, RV - OTHER PRODUCTS: Winches, Jacks & Wheel Chocks

PowerOak - ENERGY STORAGE

AC50s 500Wh

Ideal for wild camping power!

BIG PRICE REDUCTIONS!

SPECIFICATION
- *500Wh / 135200mAh capacity*
- *300 watt maximum output*

CHARGING
- *Home - AC 220v, 50Hz, 13amp*
- *Solar - 14-40v, max. 120w*
- *Car - 12v cigar lighter socket*
- *Generator - AC220v, 50 Hz*

OUTPUT
AC 220v, 50Hz, 2 sockets
Cigarette port, 12v
USB 5v x 3a, 4 sockets
Wireless, 10w charging

AC50s, 500Wh £199.50 +VAT (£239.40)
Strom 600 568Wh £249.00 +VAT (£298.80)

Strom 30i 2.1kw INVERTER GENERATOR

The perfect camping generator!

RRP £333.25 +VAT (£399.90)

VERY SMART DESIGN!

SPECIFICATION
- *3.0kw starting output*
- *Genuine 2.1kw running output*
- *15% lower fuel consumption than competitors*
- *20% larger fuel tank than competitors*
- *Light weight - only 19.8kgs*
- *Ultra quiet - 53db at 7 metres*
- *Perfect sine wave output*
- *Ideal CPAP medical, small fridge, laptop*
- *LCD display showing power, volts & speed*
- *Patented technology of quiet dual fan*
- *Dual exhaust muffler & dual sound shielding*
- *Available black or camouflage finish*
- *Certificates - CS, EMC, EPA*
- *Exclusive to Rally Design in the UK*

Solar panels (Foldable)

50w BPHD50 RRP £81.67 +VAT (£98)
100w BPHD100 RRP £123.33 +VAT (£148)

Kudos 20" Wheel Lightweight Alloy Folding bicycle

- *Double height seat post*
- *Adjustable height handlebars*
- *6-speed Shimano gearing*
- *Revoshift quick gear change*
- *52 tooth chain ring*
- *Hydro-formed aero quality frame*
- *20" double wall rims, 20 x1.5 tyres*
- *Folded size 82 x 30 x 60*
- *Weight 12.9kg*

TONIC BLACK

CITRUS ORANGE

IDEAL FOR THE VAN, GARAGE OR REAR RACK

LIMITED BIKES LEFT!

RRP £149.17 +VAT (£179.00)

Solar Lighting System

4 x 2w LED Lamps, Polychrystaline Solar

Set, BLIT04 RRP £45.75 +VAT (£54.90)

SPECIFICATION
- *8w x 11v solar panel, ally frame*
- *7.4v x 5200mah lithium battery*
- *4 x 2w high lumens LED lamps*
- *4 x 5mtr battery to lamp wires*
- *USB port phone charging*
- *Overcharge protection on battery*
- *Weight - 2.1kgs*
- *Full battery, (1) Light - 21 hours*
- *Full battery, (4) Lights - 5 hours*
- *CE Certification*

Rally Design

RALLY DESIGN LIMITED, UNIT 4, ST. AUGUSTINE'S BUSINESS PARK, ESTUARY WAY, SWALECLIFFE, KENT CT5 2QJ www.rallydesign.co.uk
• Since Covid-19 the best means of contact is by email - sales@rallydesign.co.uk

BACK OF BEYOND TOURING PARK

EAST DORSET

We meet the owners of a Dorset adults-only campsite that prides itself on its tranquillity

Back of Beyond Touring, Camping & Glamping Park is a 30-acre park nestled in Dorset woodlands, close to the New Forest National Park. A park exclusively for adults, Back of Beyond prides itself on its tranquillity and proximity to nature.

Choose from fully serviced pitches, cosy glamping units or wild camping. A dog-friendly park, there's 18 acres of woodlands for off-lead adventures.

Monty's Bar, built as a lockdown project, has gone from strength to strength and is a popular addition to the park, serving local spirits and ales.

The site is owned by husband and wife team, Martin and Victoria Bowrey.

How long have you been running your campsite?

In 2025 we will celebrate our twelfth season of running Back of Beyond.

Tell us a little about your site and how it first began

The campsite has been in place since the 1960s, but when we took it on it was tired and dated and needed investment. Over the years, we've made gradual improvements and taken the park to being an AA 5-star platinum site.

What did you do before becoming the owners of this site?

Before this, we ran our own photography business in London.

What made you want to own and run a campsite?

We wanted to raise our young family outside of London and thought that running a campsite would offer a better lifestyle for all of us.

What do you like most about being a campsite owner?

Meeting the variety of people that come through the gates to stay on our park. We take great pride in our park and it's a delight to be able to see people enjoying their holidays here.

What are the challenges?

Challenges can range in all kinds from blocked drains to tricky customers. We all pull together as a team though to get through

WE TAKE GREAT PRIDE IN OUR PARK AND IT'S A DELIGHT TO BE ABLE TO SEE PEOPLE ENJOYING THEIR HOLIDAYS HERE

those more challenging days.

What is a typical day like for you?

There really is no typical day for us, we are involved in all different aspects of the park from checking in guests to working on marketing campaigns. It keeps us all busy and we love the variety that running a campsite can bring.

What do you feel makes your site special and appealing to the guests who return every year?

Guests comment on how peaceful the park is. They love having Monty's Bar on site but that we purposely keep it to reduced hours, so after 8pm the park is peaceful.

A lot of our guests bring their dogs so they, in particular, love taking their four-legged friends on off-lead walks through our beautiful woodlands.

What do you love about the region your site is based in?

We love taking time out to explore the local beaches, particularly Southbourne Beach (this one is also dog-friendly and a lot quieter than nearby Bournemouth Beach).

The New Forest National Park is also within short reach of our park; we love spending time there walking, cycling or popping to a local pub for a Sunday lunch. Autumn is a particularly beautiful time of year in this area with the fantastic autumnal display on the trees.

What do you like to do on a rare day off?

We love to explore the local area with our dog, Muswell. Plus, Martin occasionally goes back to London to watch his favourite football team play.

Information

BACK OF BEYOND TOURING PARK
234a Ringwood Road,
East Moors Lane,
St Leonards, East Dorset BH24 2SB
T 01202 876968
E info@backofbeyondtouringpark.co.uk
W backofbeyondtouringpark.co.uk

WARNERS SHOWS

Part of the out&about LIVE family

GREAT V
SHOW
FESTIV

THE SOUTHERN
MOTORHOME & CAMPERVAN SHOW
NEWBURY
16-18 MAY 2025

THE NATI
MOTOR
CAMPERV
NEW
13-15 JU

THE WESTERN
MOTORHOME & CAMPERVAN SHOW
MALVERN
15-17 AUGUST 2025

CA

R

www.warners-shows.co.uk

ALUE
S &
VALS

ONAL
HOME &
AN SHOW
ARK
NE 2025

THE
NORFOLK
MOTORHOME &
CAMPERVAN SHOW
NORFOLK
18-20 JULY 2025

THE
SOUTHWEST
MOTORHOME &
CAMPERVAN SHOW
SHEPTON
5-7 SEPTEMBER 2025

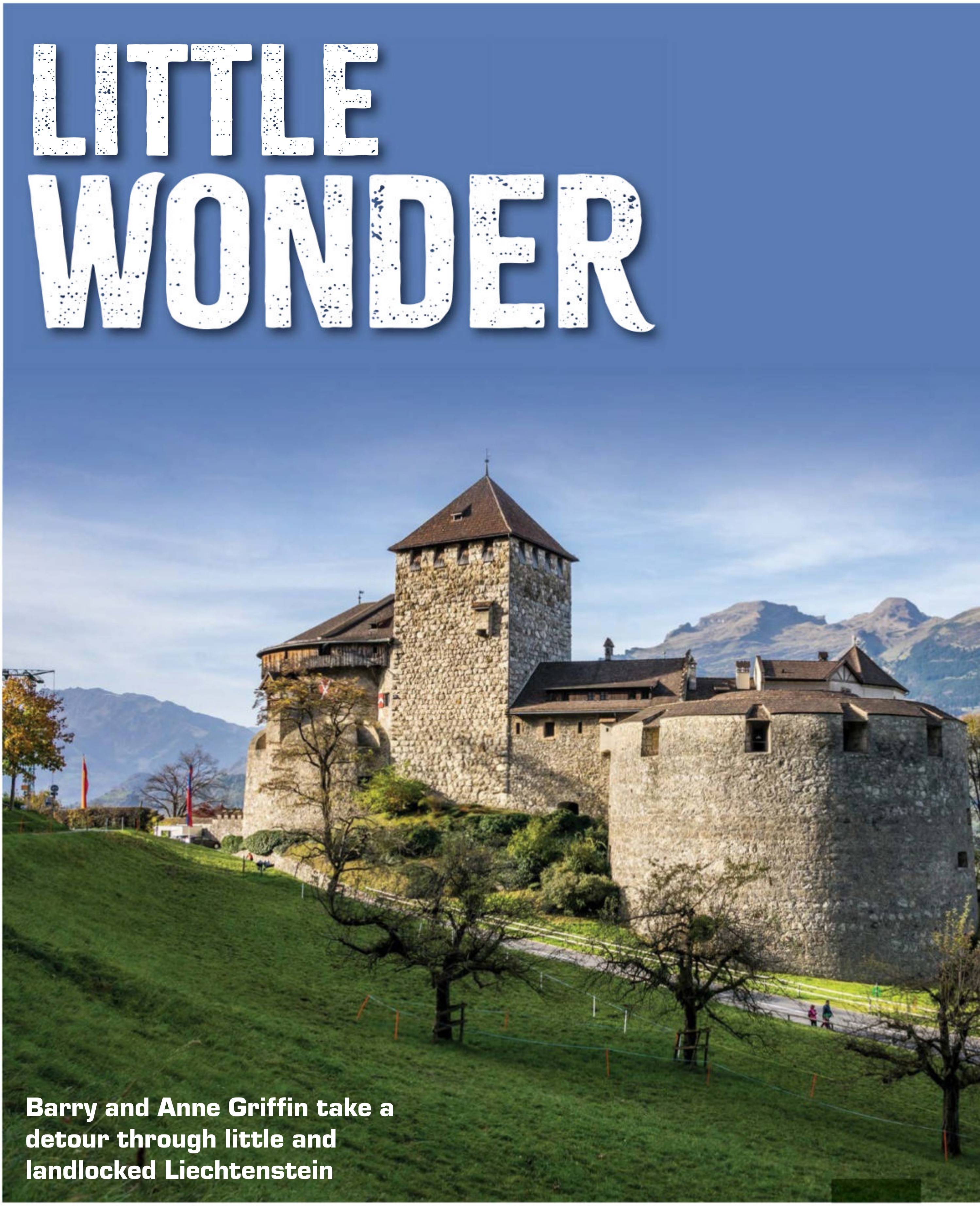
THE
SEASON FINALE
MOTORHOME &
CAMPERVAN SHOW
LINCOLN
19-21 SEPTEMBER 2025

MPERVAN
mpout
ESTIVAL
2-4 MAY 2025

THE
MALVERN
CARAVAN &
MOTORHOME SHOW
MALVERN
3-5 OCTOBER 2025

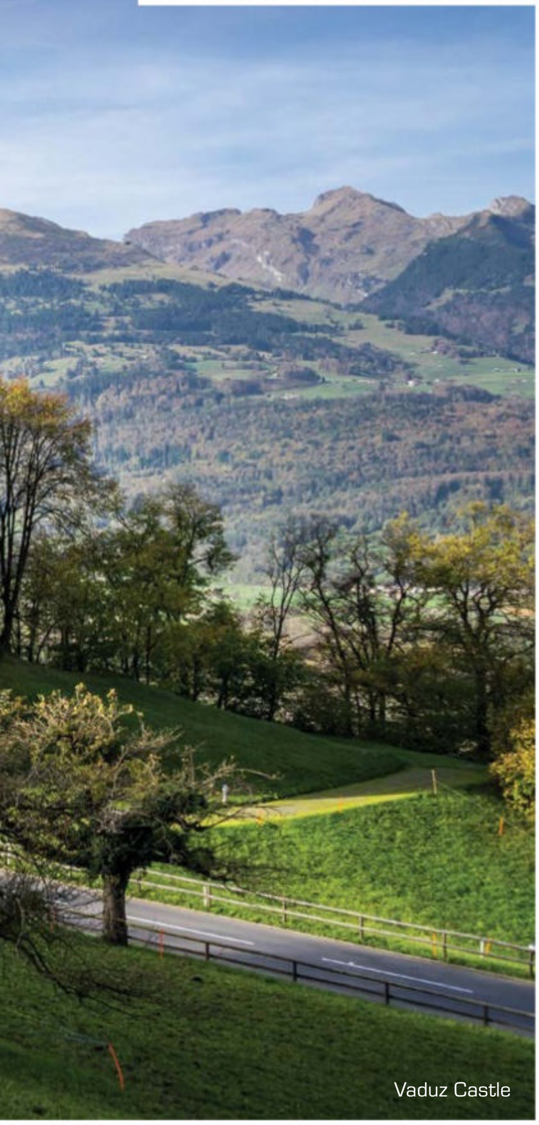
ETROFESTIVAL
8-10 AUGUST 2025

LITTLE WONDER



Barry and Anne Griffin take a detour through little and landlocked Liechtenstein

A church in the resort of Malbun


Vaduz Castle

I wonder on how many occasions travellers (including ourselves) have passed by the country of Liechtenstein without even giving it a second thought?

I have to admit it was only whilst reading an article on rare passport stamps that we noticed Liechtenstein on the list. We were driving our home from the UK to Italy soon and wanted a change from our usual route through France. Being one of the smallest countries in the world at only seven-and-a-half miles by fifteen-and-a-half miles in size, we started looking into its history and what it had to offer tourists.

Not only is this tiny state landlocked, but it's also one of just two doubly landlocked countries in the world. Being surrounded only by landlocked countries, it requires the crossing of at least two national borders to reach a coastline.

Another notable fact is that Liechtenstein's national anthem uses the same melody as the British anthem *God Save The King*. In 1984 it was also the last country in Europe to give women the right to vote.

It has a population of just 39,000 people and yet it is one of the richest countries in the world despite not even having its own airport. The more we studied Liechtenstein, the more we wanted to stop by. Once we'd read it was the second-least visited country in Europe our minds were made up. We were going.

Our research of Liechtenstein often mentioned it was an expensive place to visit, due to the principality being so small. However, thanks to being able to take our own

Government house in Vaduz

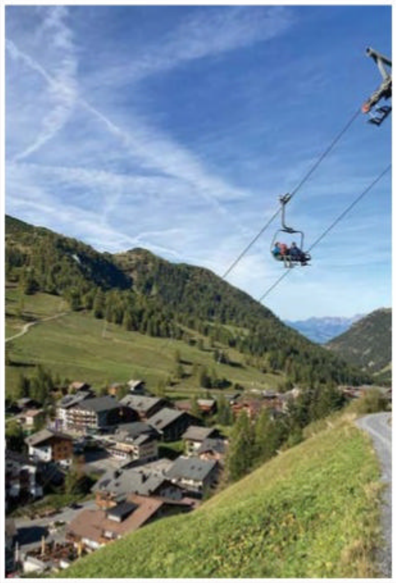
The view over Vaduz

accommodation, fuel and food, apart from the odd meal in the capital Vaduz, getting our passports stamped at its tourism office and visiting the mountain resort of Malbun, we figured out our wallets would remain relatively unscathed.

We arrived via Austria. The breathtaking alpine views and mountain castles surrounded us, including the unmissable twelfth century Vaduz Castle, which is built into the hillside 120m above Vaduz.

Although not open to the public, on 15 August every year, Prince Hans-Adam II and his son, Prince Alois, invite every resident of Liechtenstein for a beer in the castle gardens followed by a party and fireworks in the town centre. They sound like great guys who know how to party.

Unfortunately, it was October so we missed out on the celebrations, but as a consolation we met the friendly, helpful locals, explored Vaduz town centre (free two-hour parking) and collected our passport stamps before heading up into the winter sports resort of Malbun where we located a self-check-in aire for €13 with electric if needed, and settled down for a very quiet night on our own.



The winter sports resort of Malbun

The next morning, despite the lack of snow, the chairlifts were running to carry the many hillwalkers to the mountain's breathtaking summits. We love the majestic alpine scenery and it wasn't long before we commenced a trek of our own. A short while later, as the sun made its way over the towering peaks, the temperatures climbed quickly, to the point where we were easily persuaded to join several other visitors outside a local alpine hotel for refreshments.

Listening to the cow bells ringing out and simply soaking up the ambience, it seemed a world away from the stresses of everyday life and we didn't want it to end. After all, Liechtenstein does hold the record for the world's longest noise-free lunch break at 90 minutes from noon until 1.30pm, so far be it for us to contravene local traditions!

Liechtenstein had been well worth the stopover. We found it far more relaxing than previous stopovers when taking the A40 *Autoroute Blanche* (white motorway) into Italy. If we didn't have a set date to commence a farm-sit in Portogruaro, we could easily have stayed for longer.

Good things truly can come in small packages. Now this principality is no longer just a small dot on the map to us, but also a country with picturesque scenery and fascinating history to match.

Vaduz Castle

AT LAST AN ALTERNATIVE TO WEBASTO AND EBERSPACHER DIESEL HEATERS

A cheaper reliable alternative to a gas heater

autoterm
air and liquid heaters

Autoterm air diesel heaters come with a 3-year product warranty. Autoterm can supply heater kits and do full heater installations. We have over 680 authorised dealers and fitters in the UK alone.

Bestseller

T5/T6 VW 2kW AUTOTERM
air diesel heater kit
£509.25

Bestseller

Universal
Campervan/Motorhome
2kW-4kW AUTOTERM air
diesel heater kit £509.25

T4 VW diesel 2kW AUTOTERM
air diesel heater kit
£509.25

Mazda Bongo 2kW
AUTOTERM air diesel
heater kit
£567.00

The only diesel heaters with a 3 year warranty... To provide an outstanding customer experience to end-users of our products we now offer a global 3-year warranty to all heater installations registered by Autoterm certified service centres.

Our specialist service centres can offer a 3 year warranty. Visit our website www.autoterm.store to find the list of service centres.

Pixabay

Autoterm diesel heaters a name you can trust

www.autoterm.store team@autoterm.store

Free UK shipping **0330 1741 761** **Rated 5-star**

SARA COX
CAMPERVAN
Campout
FESTIVAL
2-4 MAY 2025
Campervan Culture.com
URBAN FORAGE
DAY TICKETS OR WEEKEND PASSES

FAMILY FRIENDLY FESTIVAL

HEADLINED BY SARA COX

2-4 MAY 2025

LIVE MUSIC | SILENT DISCO | THE CAMPOUT HUB
FORAGING | WELLNESS SANCTUARY

SHOPPING VILLAGE | FORAGING WALKS, TALKS AND COOKING DEMOS
BUSHCRAFTS | YOGA | BREATH WORK | SOUND HEALING | ECSTATIC DANCE
MEDITATION | BUILT NOT BOUGHT CAMPERS HUB | VDUB RADIO
SELF-BUILD SHOW | SELF-BUILD TALKS & WORKSHOPS
20+ FREE TALKS & WORKSHOPS FROM VANLIFE PERSONALITIES

WOOD CARVING | FIRE LIGHTING | PARACORD BRACELET MAKING | WOODLAND KEYRINGS
NATURAL CORDAGE | EVENING CAMPFIRE | OPEN FIRE COOKING | BEACH BARN | INFLATABLES
FACE PAINTING | KTROO | DOGGY SWIMMING POOL | AXE THROWING | IARCHERY
TARGET PAINTBALL | FOOD & DRINK | DOODLE BOARDS | FAMILY CAMPING WORKSHOPS

DAY TICKETS FROM £10 | WEEKEND PASSES FROM £170

WWW.CAMPERVANCAMPOUT.CO.UK

LIFE BEYOND BRICKS

HI

Tash is back on the road again – and it's just like starting over

As I write this, I'm away on a solo trip in my little Fabio. That's something I certainly didn't think I would be writing about before spring. What with spending the summer in Cornwall following Jon's leukaemia diagnosis and recovery, we both thought it would be at least six months until we were moving around again and possibly longer before I would go off on my own.

But, as it happens, Jon's recovery has gone incredibly well and he is back at work. I won't lie, it did feel strange leaving him for the first time to go on a road trip, but once I packed up my camper and headed off, I was settling into it in no time. In fact, it felt incredible to put some music on and sing my heart out down the road. I didn't even have anything planned, I just drove to a stop point (the nearest shops as I had a parcel to post) and then did a scan for places to visit within a couple of hours. I figured that was a good starting point.

Because I was going to sell my camper when I thought I wouldn't be using it for a long time, I had cleared it out. To some it seemed rash but it was what felt right. After all, you can only make decisions based on the information you have at the time! Anyway, my camper is no longer for sale and I'm so pleased to be using it again.

Because I emptied Fabio out, I now only have the bare essentials in there that I need for touring and I will take my main items with me from the motorhome. Over time I had doubled up on a lot of things and I didn't realise how much was in the camper. Now all of the surplus items have been sold or donated.

I know I've spoken about not carrying more than you need before and I do speak regularly about it in my talks at the Warners shows. And in this case, I fully admit to needing to take my own advice and declutter periodically. In my defence, my little 'van had been sat in storage for a lot longer than planned this summer.

Anyway, my point is, having less stuff in my camper was such a mental reset and it just added to the excitement of going away in it again. The whole experience felt like it had been refreshed somehow, but with that tinge of familiarity that is so comforting.

Another thing I'll be honest about is that my confidence in overnight stops has decreased a little. I don't think it is going away on my own that I'm nervous about, I just seem to be nervous in general about things since Cornwall. It has felt a lot like starting over.

In some ways, though, that has also added to the excitement of travelling on my own again; it's a fresh start. I have found myself drawn to campsites to start with rather than the approved parking places I am used to using. I'm going through the process of building up my solo travel confidence again and I'm loving it.

I'll share my trip in next month's column, but now I'm about to head out and treat myself to a solo dinner date!

♥ Read more about Tash and Jon's adventures at **lifebeyondbricks.co.uk** and follow them on social media

ALPINE ADVENTURES

How to spend a winter in the Alps in a small VW campervan

LES ARCS
Paradiski

Words & pictures | Richard Pickles

For years we had dreamed of spending a season skiing in the Alps, going beyond the one week a year that we managed during our working lives. However, our early retired life is run to a tight budget, so we needed to find a way to maximise our skiing time yet minimise our costs. That was as far as our planning really went when we made the decision to spend three weeks in the Alps skiing from our little VW T6 campervan, extending the already booked week-long family ski trip with our adult children.

We firmly believe that our campervan should be used all year round. Getting away in the depths of winter is different to summer camping, but it is no less rewarding. If you are prepared for the challenges of winter camping, the experience can be really enjoyable. To take year-round campervanning to the next level, we want to answer the question: how difficult is it really to live in a small T6 campervan in the Alps in winter?

Getting there

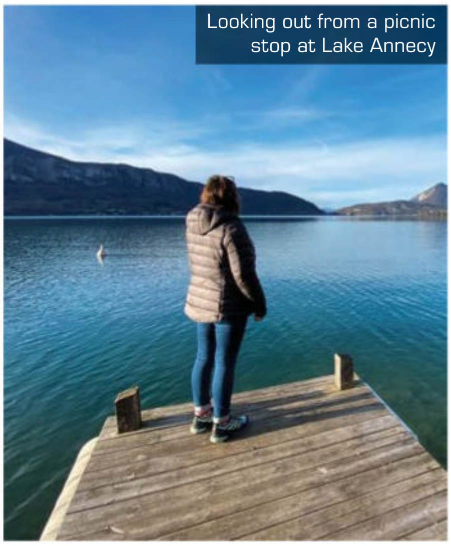
Getting to the Alps is more challenging in winter, with driving times ranging from nine hours upwards from Calais. Winter driving road conditions can be more challenging, the daylight hours are shorter and the weather is so much more unpredictable.

We have a 350-mile drive to Dover, so we always plan to have an overnight stop close to the port and book an early ferry crossing to try and provide as much daylight driving in France. In our 600-mile journey from Calais to the French Alps, we always plan to have one overnight stop to split up the long drive. This plan seems to work well for us, but we are fortunate to be early retired, so we have no time constraints for the duration of our travel.

Winter sun at 2,200m

The external screen keeps the 'van warm

Après-ski ready on the slopes



Looking out from a picnic stop at Lake Annecy

We prefer to use toll roads on our winter travels. We find them quicker, more reliable in winter conditions and generally a more relaxed drive compared to the non-toll alternatives. When heading out to ski, we want to make the journey as efficient and as stress-free as possible, and we are happy to pay the toll fees for that privilege.

Winter driving kit

The primary consideration for us is staying safe on the road and this comes down to tyre choice and the addition of snow chains/socks. In most alpine areas, it is compulsory in the winter months to have winter-graded tyres and additional equipment – please check the requirements of the region you are planning to travel to as every region is slightly different.

We drive on all-season tyres year-round. These tyres carry the all-important three-peak mountain snowflake (3PMSF) symbol that many regions require by law. We do not feel it necessary to change to specialist winter tyres each year.

We carry snow chains and ensure we are well-practised in using them before we set off. They are not the easiest to use, and are even more difficult to fit in sub-zero, wet and dark

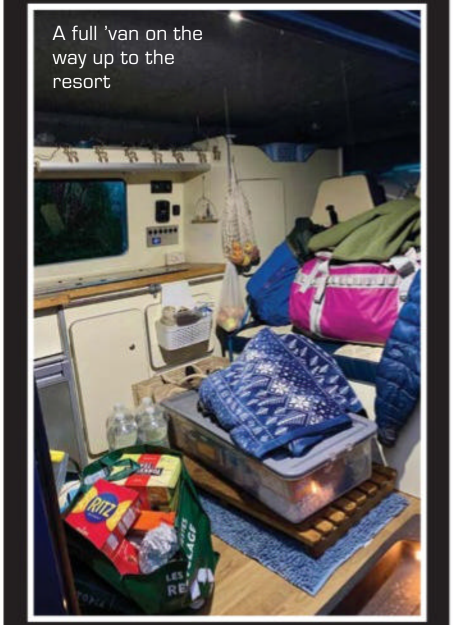
☑ TOP TIPS

DRIVING TACTICS

Driving to the Alps is a long way. Everyone has their own individual capacity for long-distance driving. Know your capacity and formulate a travel plan around that. Take regular breaks, even if it is just for a quick stretch of the legs.

STAYING WARM

It is not that difficult if you have a plan. Dress for cold conditions using the layering system. We love our merino wool thermals that we use all the time in winter. Take a small electric heater for use when on EHU. Use a winter-weight duvet, thick winter bedding and a few extra blankets for if it gets really cold at night.



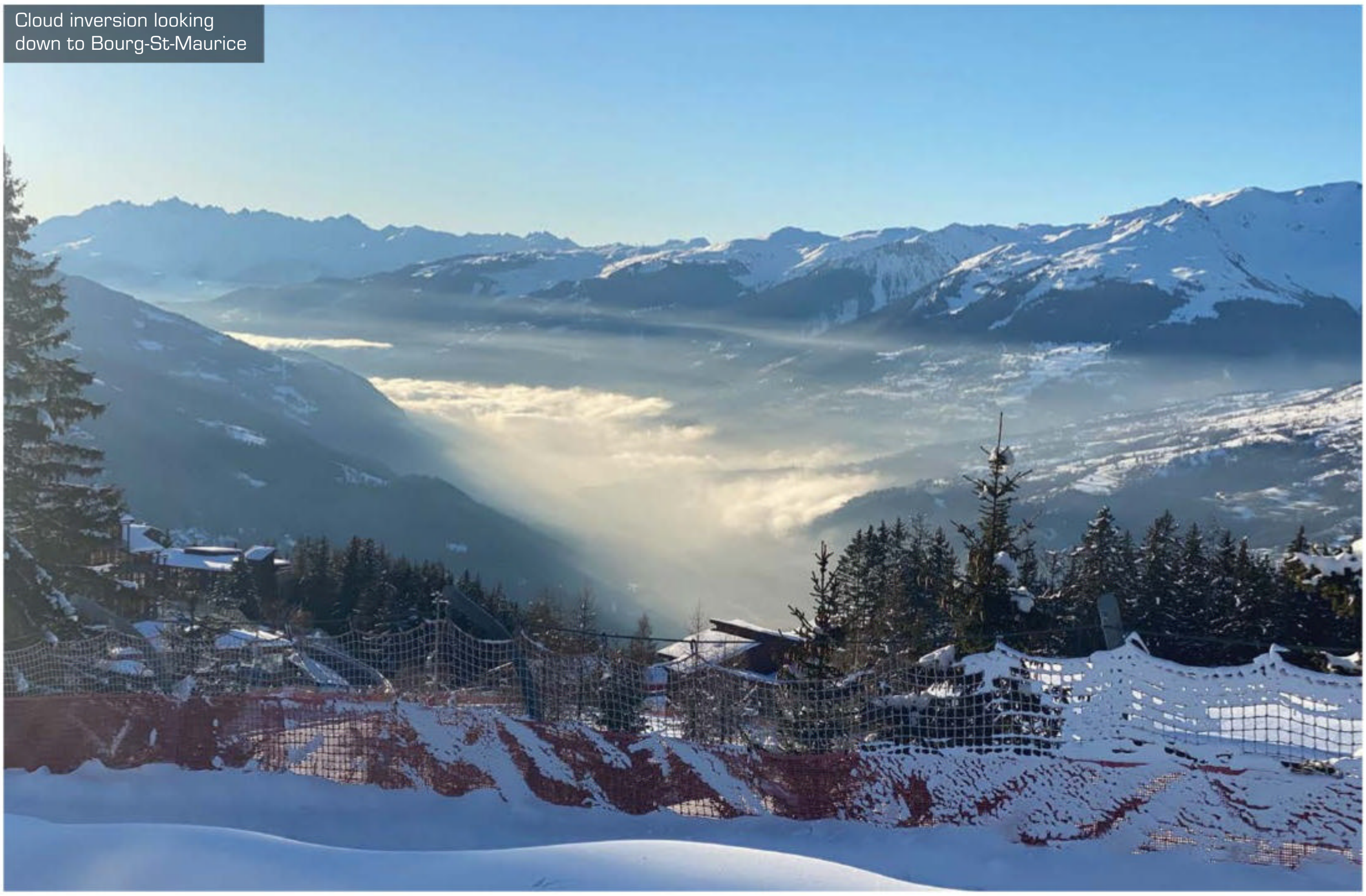
A full 'van on the way up to the resort

WINTER DRIVING EQUIPMENT

Snow chains are pretty much essential in alpine regions in winter. Make sure you know how to fit them and you have practised using them before leaving home. Using snow chains for the first time on a snowy mountain pass in the dark is not recommended! We also use choose to use all-season tyres on our 'van that have the essential 3PMSF symbol for winter mountain use.

WHERE TO STAY

Living in a small 'van with no on-board facilities in winter is not easy. We always choose to stay on winterised campsites to make the experience as easy as possible with their heated toilet blocks, hot showers and shared social spaces. We also choose to stay at lower altitudes as the weather conditions are often less extreme than high in the mountain villages.



Cloud inversion looking down to Bourg-St-Maurice

conditions on a high mountain pass during a heavy snowstorm! We have used snow socks in the past, but for the tiny price difference, chains are so much more durable. We also carry a heavy-duty plastic sack for kneeling on and for storing the icy chains when removed. A good pair of waterproof work gloves also help when fitting snow chains. We also carry a snow shovel which can be useful for digging the 'van out after a heavy snowfall!

Prolonged sub-zero temperatures can be a real challenge for any vehicle. We use an extreme screen wash that goes down to -25ºC. Another consideration is the potential for diesel to freeze at altitude. To counteract this, we always top up the 'van at the mountain fuel stations before we park up for our stay. The diesel sold locally has an antifreeze additive.

Staying warm

We are very fortunate to have a very well insulated 'van. If you are unsure about this in your own 'van, check it out prior to departure as a few sub-zero nights will soon expose any lack of insulation! One of the hardest places to insulate is the front cab area – we always use an external thermal screen.

There are similar external wrap options for insulating pop-top roofs, but we have never found the need. If the temperatures get too cold, we just keep the roof down... and have to cope with the subsequent lack of space in the 'van!

Bedding is an individual choice in the campervan world, but we choose a duvet rather than sleeping bags. In winter, we have a heavy-weight duvet, brushed cotton bedding and additional blankets. We have never felt the need to have to use the heater once we are in bed, and we have never had a sleepless night due to the cold.

Our 'van is equipped with an LPG heater that runs off our underslung refillable tank. With the VW Transporter being so small, it heats up in minutes... even boiling the morning kettle will warm up the 'van! When we are camping in the Alps in winter, we have the added advantage of campsite EHU, so we take a small electric heater which allows us to preserve our LPG supply.

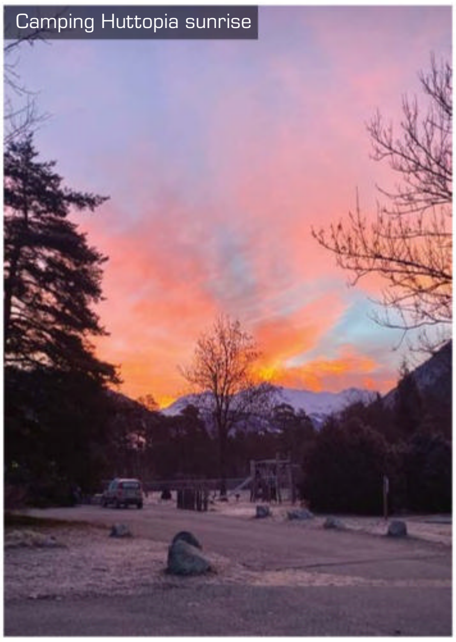
A picnic stop on a warmer day on the glacier

Winter camping considerations

Our T6 conversion, like most small campervans, does not have a winterised water system, so we do not use the on-board tanks in winter. The only water we hold are two 5l containers that we keep in the 'van for cooking and drinking. Similarly, we do not use the waste tank in winter as it is also not insulated from the cold.

Condensation when living in a 'van in winter can be a real problem. We try to keep cooking condensation to a minimum by choosing quick-boiling foods and keeping windows ajar whenever we can. An absolute revelation is a Karcher window vac – we cannot believe how much moisture this little machine can gather.

In winter we inevitably spend more time inside the 'van than we do in the summer, which does highlight storage issues. We think carefully about what we need for every trip and try to minimise what we take. We utilise



Camping Huttopia sunrise

A sprinkling of snow at the valley campsite

every available space in the 'van – the front footwells, the dashboard, under the 'van in waterproof boxes... with each storage space housing something specific.

A persistent challenge is keeping winter outside the 'van. The easiest solution we have found when entering the 'van is a duct board arrangement and lots of washable floor mats for inside the 'van. A duct board gives a place to knock snow off boots, raises our final step into the 'van out of the wet and massively reduces the amount of snow and grime we bring into the 'van.

Living out of a small 'van means that we are reliant on campsite facilities. Warm toilets, showers, somewhere to wash up, a drying room, reliable EHU and a good fresh water supply are all on our requirements list of a fully winterised campsite!

Winter ferry crossing under blue skies

Where to stay

With our small T6 campervan, with no on-board toilet facilities, we always choose to stay on a campsite. In many cases, the price differential between serviced aires and campsites is negligible, with campsites offering fully winterised facilities. We do, however, accept that with large, fully winterised motorhomes, savings can be made by staying at aires.

Staying high up in the mountains offers ski-in and ski-out flexibility, but the days are colder, the temperatures more extreme and camping at altitude has its own list of challenges. Staying in the valleys is often warmer and has easier access to cheaper local amenities; however, the ski slopes are not quite as accessible.

When to go

The weather conditions in high Alpine areas vary so much during the course of a winter season. In January, conditions are generally cold and snowy but offer reliable skiing conditions. As the season progresses, the daylight hours get longer, the temperatures get warmer and as such the snow conditions can be more unreliable. It is easier to camp in warmer March, but the snow conditions tend to be better in January.

In addition, the French school holidays fall across the whole of February, with prices going up and the crowds increasing during that time.

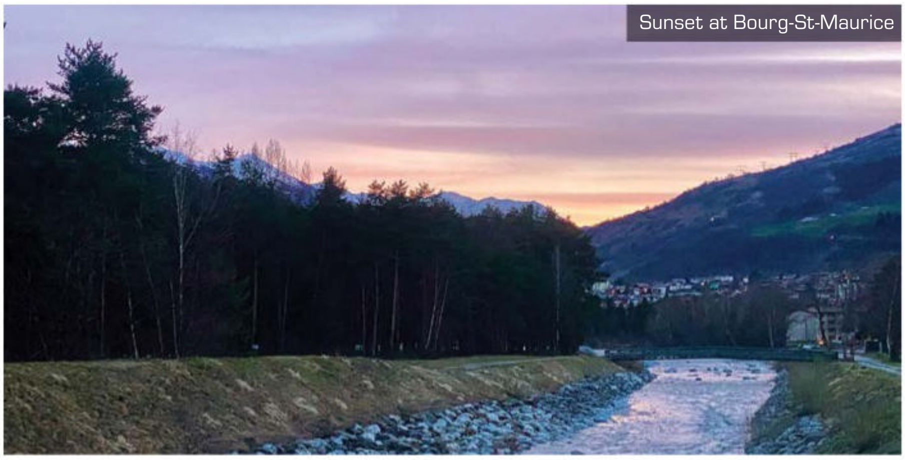
What to do if I don't ski?

Every year we meet people who are skiing for the first time, no matter of age or ability, so do not think that it is ever too late to learn to ski.

Other winter activities that are good to try out are snowshoeing with guided walks available at most resorts. Toboggan runs are becoming increasingly more popular, with designated runs from the ski lifts so there is no need to have to climb the hills.

The alps have an amazing network of walking trails that are well signposted and can be used all year round. And in the valleys, the network of cycle trails makes exploring the area easy and safe on bikes.

For a more relaxed experience, most resorts have excellent spa facilities that offer day passes to guests.



Sunset at Bourg-St-Maurice

DESTINATION EUROPE

Find out how to plan the perfect campervan road trip on the continent

forcdan/ stock.adobe.com

Words ▮ Iain Duff

A road trip through Europe is one of the main reasons many people buy a campervan. Rather than flying over the Continent at 30,000ft or whizzing through the countryside on a 200mph train, driving lets you get up close and personal with Europe's picturesque landscapes and diverse cultures. But whether you're planning a leisurely jaunt through Brittany or taking a long trek to Croatia, you need to be well-prepared and know what you're doing.

Our guide covers everything you need to know to ensure your journey is smooth, enjoyable and, of course, safe. From essential documents and required equipment to driving tips and general travel advice, you'll find it all here.

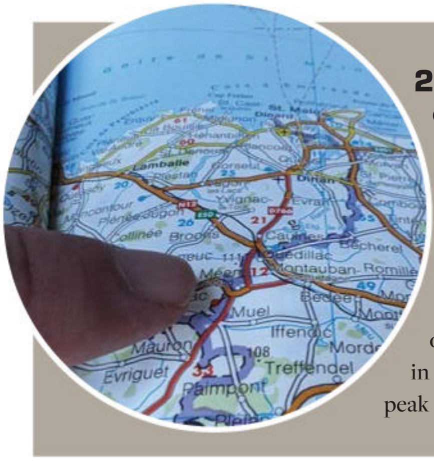
1 GETTING READY TO GO

Before setting off, make sure your vehicle is roadworthy. If your MoT is due, get it done before your trip and ensure any scheduled vehicle and habitation services are up to date.

Many motor insurance policies will automatically give you basic cover for European travel but a separate, more comprehensive policy is usually available for overseas driving.

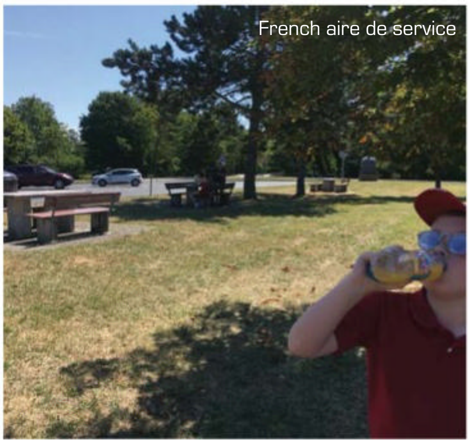
European vehicle breakdown insurance is essential to avoid major disruption to your holiday should you suffer a mechanical failure. Most campervan insurers include European breakdown cover or offer it as an optional extra, but you can take out cover directly with the likes of the AA, RAC or Green Flag. Always check the cover includes breakdowns on the campsite and that there's no restriction on the weight or length of the unit.

French aire de service



2 PLANNING YOUR TRIP

Consider planning your route in advance, taking note of tolls in many European countries. While toll roads can be efficient, exploring smaller villages can add charm to your journey. A good paper map can be a valuable companion alongside digital navigation tools. Some people prefer unplanned wandering and this is possible because of the ready availability of aires for nightly stopovers in many European countries, but watch out for the peak holiday season and popular destinations.


French aire de service

3 PAPERWORK

Before setting off, ensure you have essential documents like a valid passport, your driving licence, V5C certificate, MoT certificate and European vehicle insurance. Don't forget items like emission stickers, Camping Card International, first aid kit, warning triangles and more, depending on the countries you'll visit. An international driving licence is not needed for EU travel if you have a photocard driving licence issued in the UK.

Certain countries outside of the EU will require you to have an insurance green card. This is needed if you are involved in an accident and you may need to show it along with other documents at police checks and border crossings.

An EHIC (European Health Insurance Card) within its expiry date is still valid in Europe. If not, apply for a UK Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) which gives you the right to access state-provided healthcare during a temporary stay in the European Union, the same as an EHIC.

You can apply for a GHIC on the **nhs.uk** website. It's worth noting that you may still be liable for the cost of medication and other health facilities, so ensure you have proper travel health insurance. Check your insurance covers the length of stay and countries you are going to visit.

You'll also need a UK identification sticker to attach to the back of your 'van.

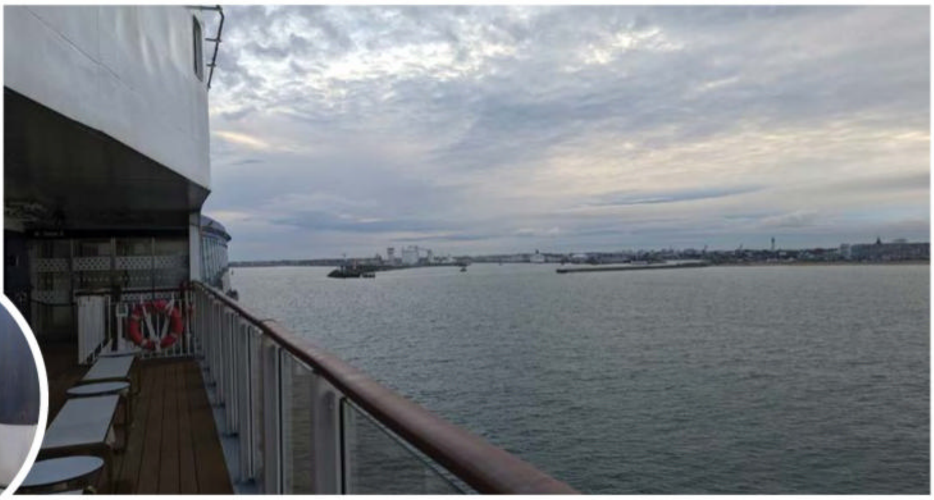
4 HOW TO GET THERE

For visiting France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany the most direct route for crossing to the Continent is via the Channel. This means taking the tunnel or a ferry. They both run regularly day and night but the benefit of the tunnel is its speed – just 35 minutes compared to the Dover to Calais ferry's crossing time of an hour and a half.

Dover to Calais is still the most popular ferry crossing, but for journeys to Normandy and Brittany, ferries into France's northern ports (Le Havre, Caen, Cherbourg, St-Malo and Roscoff) are recommended. The travel time is longer (overnight Portsmouth to St-Malo takes 11 hours) and they can be more expensive but they save huge amounts of time and fuel driving from Calais.

Don't discount how large France is when preparing your travel plans. This is especially true if you are driving south to Spain – it can take a couple of days of fairly intense driving to reach the Spanish border. And so, there are ferries from UK ports (Poole, Portsmouth and Plymouth) that slowly make their way to northern Spain (Santander and Bilbao). The Netherlands is also served from England's eastern terminals (Hull, Harwich and Newcastle). From the Dutch ports you can easily travel on to Germany, Scandinavia and the other northern European countries.

Ferries also have rules on carrying gas, but check terms and conditions on individual ferry websites.



5 BORDER CONTROLS

Since Brexit, passing through passport control on the way in and out of the UK may take longer using the non-EU lanes and you may be asked to show a return or onward ticket and proof that you have the funds to cover the trip.

For residents of Northern Ireland, many aspects of EU travel dealt with here vary because of its unique status of having one foot in the EU while remaining part of the UK.

Your passport must have at least six months validity and be less than 10 years old. When travelling to Ireland your passport need only be valid for the length of your stay.

Once you enter the EU you can travel freely from country to country. Between most of the states there are no border posts as such and generally all you will see is a roadside sign to indicate that you have entered another country.

Your stay in the Schengen area is now limited to 90 days within a 180-day period unless you have a visa to stay longer. The introduction of the EU's new electronic travel authorisation called ETIAS (European Travel Information and Authorisation System) has been delayed but is expected to be introduced at some point in 2025.

Camping in Provence

6 ON THE ROAD

Driving in Europe comes with its own set of rules and etiquettes. The most obvious difference, of course, is that the vast majority of European countries drive on the right-hand side of the road.

As daunting as it might seem at first, you should find you will adapt to driving on the right-hand side of the road surprisingly quickly. Many continental roads, especially the motorways, tend to be much quieter than at home, giving you a chance to think carefully before you manoeuvre.

Roundabouts are often the trickiest thing to adjust to – remember they go in an anticlockwise direction – but also exercise caution when overtaking in a right-hand drive campervan.

Salzburg
Deggendorf Nürnber
Messe/ICM
M
Arena
Stuttgart Augsburg

7 WATCH YOUR SPEED

Speed limits vary across Europe so check in advance what the rules are and keep a close eye on the speed limit signs.

It's wise to get used to using the kph dial on your speedometer before you go abroad. It's easy to forget, and you could find yourself speeding by mistake because you're looking at the wrong scale. Roughly speaking, 50kph is about 30mph, 80kph is about 50mph, 120kph is about 75mph. Generally speaking, the speed limit on motorways is 120 to 130kph, on rural roads the limit is between 80 and 90kph, and 50kph on urban roads. However, check before you go and keep an eye on road signs.

It's also worth knowing that some speed limits in Europe vary in inclement weather, too. Although there is still some confusion post-Brexit, assume that if you commit a vehicle offence like speeding or illegal parking, the police will pursue any fine and licence endorsement through the British authorities, as before.

Speed camera detectors are banned in France and other European countries so make sure you disable the feature if you have it.

8 SAFETY FIRST

Drive carefully and be cautious, especially considering that local driving styles may differ significantly from those in the UK. Driving long distances in unfamiliar areas can be exhausting, so take frequent breaks and rest if you feel tired. Safety should always be your highest priority.

It goes without saying that you should always wear your seatbelt, don't use your mobile phone while driving and stay focused on the road, not your sat-nav. If you have an accident, contact your insurer immediately and involve the police. Collect full details from the other party involved, gather witness information, and document the damage with photographs.

Just as at home, guard against vehicle theft by staying vigilant. Avoid leaving valuables in plain sight, lock your vehicle, and choose well-lit parking areas.

oleksii.leonov/adobe.stock.com

ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT FOR DRIVING

Be sure to pack the following items when driving in Europe

REFLECTIVE JACKETS
Keep one reflective jacket for each passenger within the cabin of the vehicle. These jackets enhance visibility in case of roadside emergencies

WARNING TRIANGLE
At least one warning triangle is compulsory in most European countries. In the event of a breakdown or accident, place the triangle on the road to alert other drivers

HEADLAMP BEAM DEFLECTORS
Depending on your vehicle, you'll need either deflector stickers or manual adjustments to your headlamp beam. This is crucial for driving on the right-hand side of the road to prevent you from dazzling oncoming drivers

FIRST AID KIT
This is compulsory in Austria, France and Germany but it makes sense to pack one, wherever you are going

CAMPING IN EUROPE

Unlike the UK, many European countries have an abundance of overnight stops for campervans and motorhomes, referred to generally as aire de service du camping car, commonly shortened to aires (stellplätze in Germany and sostas in Italy), which are low cost or even free, with water and dump stations and sometimes electric hook-ups. Not all have these facilities, though, some are just parking.

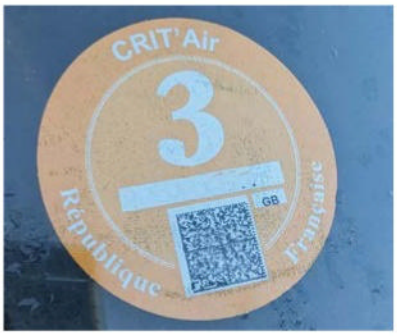
These aires are not to be confused with aires de service, which in France are the motorway service stations. Don't be tempted to stop overnight at one of these, as they have a reputation for night-time break-ins.

Many aires can be found in close proximity to villages and the basis for their existence is that visitors will benefit the local community by spending money in the local shops. Aires operate on a first come, first served basis, so it's best to sort out your chosen stop earlier rather than later if you particularly want to park at that location.

Facilities will vary enormously, both in extent and quality, and this is where an up-to-date guide helps. While many aires will be free, often water needs to be paid for, sometimes using coins and other times by use of a token (jeton in France) which have to be bought at a nearby shop or café. Bear in mind, many have no toilets or showers at all, so you will need to have your own on-board facilities or look for local public toilets.

For longer stays, you need a proper campsite. Europe has thousands of quality sites, with all the facilities you would expect. In summer, book in advance to ensure you get a good pitch, especially in popular areas.

9 ENVIRONMENTAL ZONES



If you are planning to enter major cities and towns, it's worth checking on the environmental restrictions in operation before departing from the UK. There are many schemes across Europe which restrict vehicular access into urban areas and keeping track of them all can be complicated. In most cases you need to apply for a windscreen sticker which will indicate your environmental rating and your vehicle's entitlement to enter (or not) specific areas.

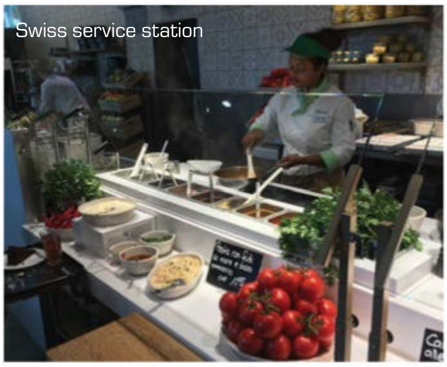
Germany has its Umwelt stickers and in France it's Crit'Air stickers, but most major countries have their own equivalent. See **urbanaccessregulations.eu** for further information. Normally the stickers can be bought online in advance but always make sure you buy from official sources as there are third party sellers who may sell you a genuine sticker, but at much inflated prices.

11 FUEL

The three common vehicle fuels – petrol, diesel and LPG – are available throughout Europe. On the motorways, most fuel stations are open 24 hours but in cities and towns they may close at around 8pm and on Sundays some may not open at all. Fuel prices vary across Europe. If you're put off using motorway services because you're used to grotty, overpriced UK stops, think again. Most on the Continent are a joy to use – some are simply picnic areas but others have petrol stations, shops and excellent food outlets. You may need local currency to use the loos at some, though.

The best services we've encountered are in Switzerland, where everything is predictably pristine and the food reasonably priced and genuinely of restaurant quality. Do be aware, though, that facilities at stops in some of the more remote places can be quite "rustic".

Switzerland campsite


Swiss service station

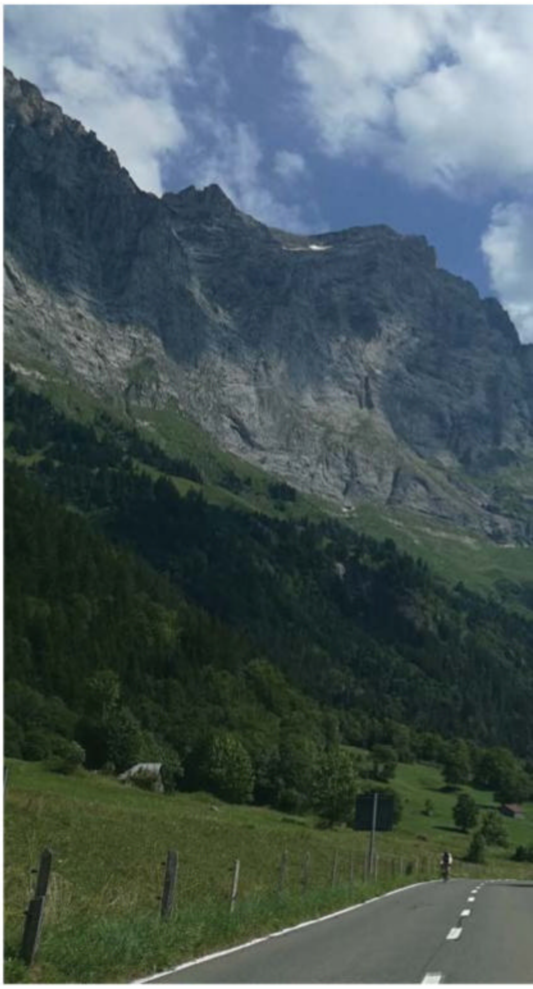
10 TOLL ROADS

When planning your route, check where any tolls are, so you don't get any nasty surprises. Many European motorways are funded by tolls, which are often expensive and will vary according to the class of your vehicle.

Do be wary of the payment booths at the start and end of the motorways – they are on the wrong side for right-hand-drive vehicles, so it's tricky to line up correctly to take the ticket or pay the toll without your passenger needing to lean precariously out of the window. And if you are travelling alone, you'll have to get out and walk around to the machine.

In most cases toll booths offer a selection of payment by cash, debit or credit card or automatic electronic tags, which need to be obtained before travelling. For general information see **tolls.eu**

For countries like Switzerland and Austria you need a special motorway pass (vignette), which can be bought online in advance or at the border.



12 TRAVELLING WITH YOUR PETS

Another impact of Brexit is that you can no longer use an EU pet passport issued in Great Britain for travel to a European Union country.

Now, you need an animal health certificate (AHC) and show proof of their microchip and rabies vaccination. Proof of tapeworm treatment is also required for animals that are travelling to Finland, Ireland, Norway and Northern Ireland.

The AHC must be obtained no more than 10 days before you travel and is valid for four months for EU travel and four months for re-entry to the UK. For further information check out the **gov.uk** website.

Driving through the Alps

GENERAL TRAVEL TIPS

Here are some general travel tips to enhance your overall European road trip experience

CHECK YOUR ROAMING CHARGES
Contact your service provider to ensure your phone works seamlessly abroad. Since Brexit, most mobile companies have scrapped free roaming in the EU for UK customers, so it's essential to be informed

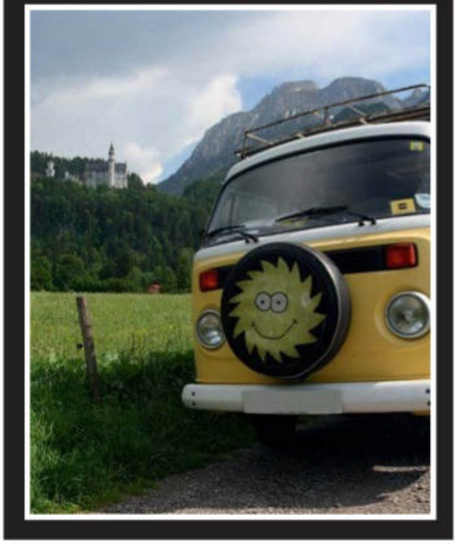
KNOW YOUR LIMIT
Before attempting to bring back food and plants to the UK, check local import regulations. Ignoring these regulations can lead to complications at customs

WEAR SUN CREAM
Make sure you keep protected from the sun in the summer. Stay hydrated in hot weather, as well

COPY THAT...
Make photocopies of essential documents, such as your passport and driving licence, and keep them separate from the originals

PACK YOUR BUDGIE SMUGGLERS
When it's hot, cooling off in the pool is bliss, but for reasons best known to themselves, many campsites on the Continent insist that men must wear tight, budgie smuggler-style trunks rather than Bermuda shorts. So, make sure you take a pair with you or risk having to traipse around the shops looking for a pair or being banned completely from the campsite swimming pool

BEAT THE BUGS
Mosquito bites can ruin a foreign holiday, especially if they get infected, so you can never have too much spray and cream with you. Citronella candles can also keep the bugs at bay but, if you do get bitten, make sure you've got something to relieve the symptoms stashed in your first aid box



NEWS

Find out what's going on in the world of campervanning

SURVEY REVEALS GROWTH IN ENTHUSIASM FOR UK ROAD TRIPS

A survey has revealed a growing enthusiasm for road trips, especially among younger adventurers.

Over 50% of respondents to the survey by The Caravan and Motorhome Club selected the UK as their top road trip destination, with this preference being strong among 18 to 24-year-olds, 60% of whom expressed a desire to explore the UK's scenic landscapes. The trend highlights the growing appeal of affordable, flexible travel closer to home.

The survey also showed that UK beaches are the most popular attraction for road trippers, with 32% of respondents choosing the seaside as their must-visit venue.

National parks and lakes also featured highly on the list, demonstrating the strong connection between road trips and the UK outdoors.

ECO CAMPERVAN LAUNCHED AT UNDER £20,000

hybrid escape

A hybrid campervan costing under £20,000 has been launched by UK-based conversion company, CampervanCo.

The hybrid Toyota Eco Escape is based on a Japanese import Toyota Hybrid Estima MPV and can sleep up to four people.

It is ULEZ complaint and is aimed at people looking for a vehicle that works as an everyday car as well as a campervan.

Under the bonnet is Toyota's low-emission Hybrid Synergy Drive system which, according to CampervanCo, will allow you to live off-grid for days on end, especially in the summer.

CampervanCo CEO, Gary Hayes, describes the Escape as "one vehicle designed for everyday life."

In the living area, the main feature of the interior is a full-width adjustable bed. This gives loads of floor space for luggage, sports equipment and everyday kit. It comes with two sleeping areas, cooker, fridge, dining area and swivel front seats.

There's the choice of two roof beds – an elevating roof or a roof tent. The roof tent option is the cheaper of the two – starting at £19,995, while the pop-up roof option is £20,995. The conversions are all built to order in CampervanCo's factory in Denny, near Glasgow in central Scotland.

Gary said, "We don't want to see campervans sitting on the driveway for eight months out of 10; that's a waste of resources and does not realise the incredible benefits that hybrids bring to reducing emissions.

"I set my design team the challenge of designing a vehicle that was affordable but comes with all the essentials such as cooking, fridge, sink, leisure battery, two bed areas, boot space, swivel seats, ULEZ compliance and can seat a family of five.

"It took us two whole years to develop the Escape while keeping the costs down. We wanted to make this high-tech but simple and affordable. Today we can announce 'We did it' by launching the Eco Escape. We are very proud to offer this all-round camper at such an affordable price."

CampervanCo introduced its first hybrid camper in 2016 and last year launched the Eco Revolution, a fully electric campervan.

DJ SARA TOPS CAMPOUT BILL

Radio 2 star Sara Cox is to headline the 2025 Campervan Campout festival, it's been announced.

She will bring her "Power Wower" set, packed with danceable festival anthems, to the three-day event taking place at Ardingly on 2-4 May.

Festival-goers can also look forward to acts like The Houndogs, Ultra 90s vs 2000s and Levi Roots on the main stage.

The family-friendly event not only has a great music line-up, but also a wellness sanctuary for relaxation, a bustling street food area, and the Campout Hub for talks, workshops, and all things camping.

Families can enjoy activities ranging from axe throwing and archery to interactive games, while the silent disco is a unique way to dance the night away.

This year, the festival gets improved showers and toilets. A pitch for two adults and up to three children is priced at £170.

CAMPERVAN
Campout
FESTIVAL
2-4 MAY 2025

Bookings have now opened for Warners Shows' 2025 full season of events, including the Campervan Campout.

The Norfolk Show is set to relaunch as the Out & About Live Summer Party, where visitors can enjoy live music, activities and entertainment around the clock. We've also expanded our festival offerings, welcoming Retro Festival into the lineup for the first time.

It all kicks off with the January Motorhome & Campervan Sale, which runs from 17 – 19 January, 2025 at Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth.

- For more information on all our 2025 shows and festivals, take a look at our website **outandaboutlive.co.uk/shows**

VW CALIFORNIA NOW ON SALE

Volkswagen is now taking orders for its new California campervan, with prices starting at a shade over £63,000.

There are five models available, all with VW's seven-speed DSG automatic gearbox as standard.

The entry model is the 150hp California Beach Camper (£63,376), while the range-topper is the 204hp California Ocean (£80,392).

CAMPERVAN RENTERS 'EARN OVER £50K'

A campervan is your gateway to freedom and adventure. But wouldn't it be great if it could generate some income for you, too?

Well, apparently it can – and it's not an insignificant amount, either.

Campervan ownership is already proving to be a lucrative side hustle for many people, with London proving to be especially rewarding. In fact, many campervan owners are said to be earning upwards of £10,000 a year by renting out their 'vans and some are enjoying an income of more than £50k a year.

That is according to peer-to-peer hire and motorhome-sharing community, Camplify, whose analysts compared search data with website page impressions and fleet saturation in locations across the country.

According to the data, campervan owners in London have the strongest chance to capitalise on the growing trend of 'van hire and earn a substantial side income by listing their vehicles on the platform.

London leads the pack as the most searched destination on the Camplify website, ranks top on searches for campervan hire and is also the most visited page on the site.

"Our insights highlight London as the undisputed champion of locations for 'van hire side hustles," said Flavia Robles Lorente, Marketing Manager at Camplify.

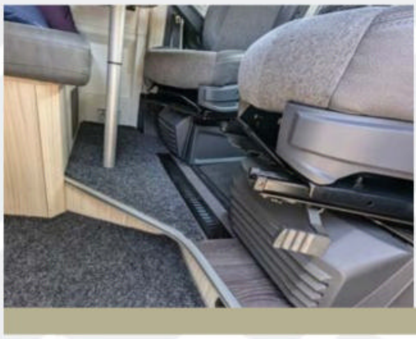
"With the surge in demand for 'van hires in the region, now is the perfect time for owners to unlock their 'van's earning potential through Camplify and join the thriving community of 'van-trepreneurs.'"

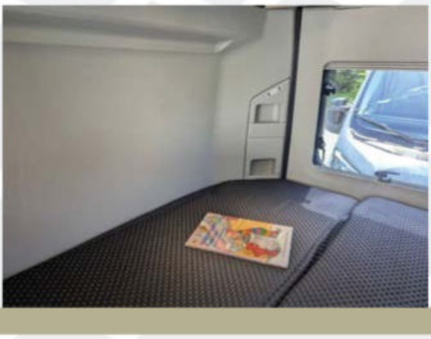
Camplify UK has also launched Camper+, a new membership programme helping campervan, motorhome and caravan owners earn extra cash with reduced commissions, comprehensive insurance, and 24/7 roadside assistance.

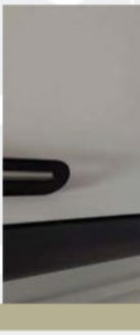
HERE COMES THE SUN

WATCH THE VIDEO
motorhome.ma/sunliving

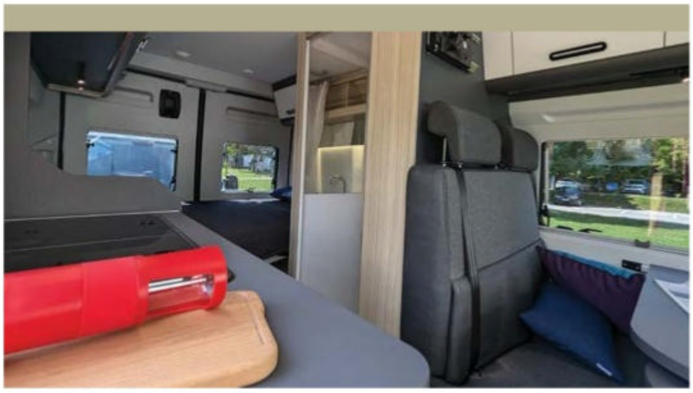
Adria's entry-level brand, Sun Living, has an expanded range for the 2025 season







SUNLIVING
V55SP



Built in Slovenia alongside their more prestigious sisters from the parent company, Adria Mobil, the Sun Living brand has a history going back more than a decade and a half. It offers a more affordable entry into the world of campervans and motorhomes with vehicles designed to appeal to both newcomers and experienced owners. It says its vehicles are 'convenient to own, simple to use and enjoy' while also offering 'everything you need and nothing you don't'.

Today, it offers an enhanced line-up of campervans built exclusively on the revised Series 10 Fiat Ducato. Throughout the 2025-season line-up there's a new look, with a darker blue on the exterior graphics, while retaining the bold diagonal design.

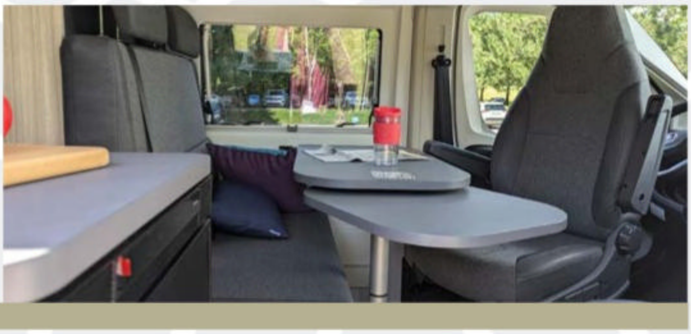
In the UK, you can currently buy the Sun Living range at the following dealers: Brownhills (Newark), Geoff Cox Leisure (Derbyshire), Highbridge Caravan Centre (branches in Somerset and Devon), Wandahome (South Cave branch, near Hull), and Yorkshire Caravans & Motorhomes (Doncaster).

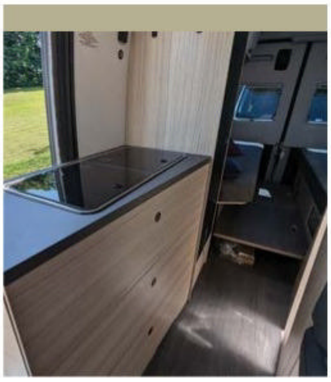
V Series

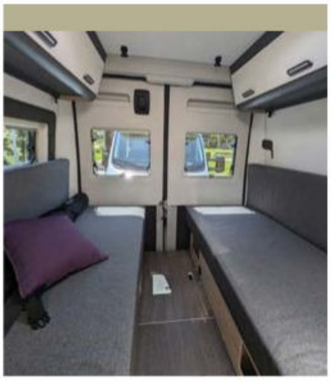
Sun Living continues to offer a range of campervans, all based on the latest-generation Fiat Ducato. This facelifted base vehicle benefits from a new grille, more aerodynamic door mirrors, a retuned engine and the option of an eight-speed automatic gearbox.

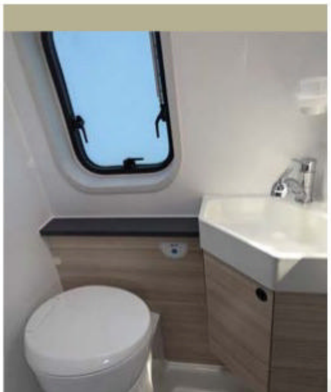
The latest V Series 'vans, like the Sun Living motorhomes, get sportier graphics, now in dark grey. Similarly, added contrast can be found on the inside with new fabrics and black details, such as cupboard catches, taps and shower door frames. Reflecting the move away from gas for greater off-grid independence, the latest campervans also feature diesel-powered Truma Combi heating.

Four models are available in the V Series range, with the exciting addition of a new compact model for 2025. The V 55SP is based on the medium-wheelbase Ducato, so is only 5.41m long – a size not available in









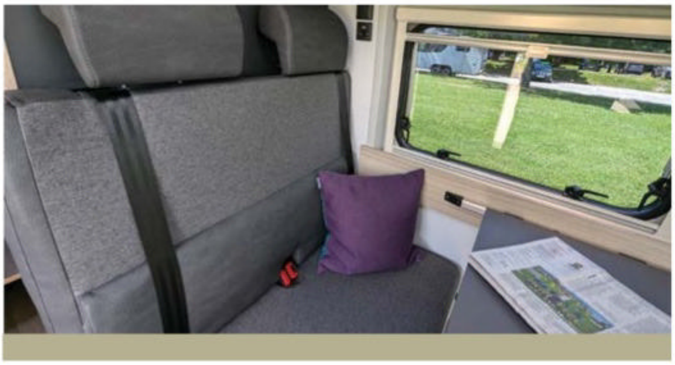
FACT FILE

V 55SP
Price £69,835 (includes automatic gearbox)
Length 5.41m (17ft 9in)
Width 2.05m (6ft 9in)
Height 2.58m (8ft 6in)
Gross weight 3,500kg
Payload 807kg

V 55SP TentTop
Price £72,235 (includes automatic gearbox)
Length 5.41m (17ft 9in)
Width 2.05m (6ft 9in)
Height 2.65m (8ft 8in)
Gross weight 3,500kg
Payload 687kg

V 60SP
Price £66,690
Length 5.99m (19ft 8in)
Width 2.05m (6ft 9in)
Height 2.58m (8ft 6in)
Gross weight 3,500kg
Payload 662kg

V 65SL
Price £68,410
Length 6.36m (20ft 10in)
Width 2.05m (6ft 9in)
Height 2.60m (8ft 6in)
Gross weight 3,500kg
Payload 560kg



the Twin campervan range from parent company, Adria. It is only available with an automatic gearbox (the larger models can be manual or auto'), but it is also the only model offered as a TentTop version with a rising roof to provide an additional 2.00m by 1.30m double bed.

Whether specified with or without the TentTop, the V 55SP has a half-dinette front lounge (fitted with Isofix), plus swivel cab seats and a wall-mounted table, which includes a swing-out extension leaf. Its side kitchen is adjacent to the offside sliding door and, with its 84-litre compressor fridge facing forwards, it's easy to reach a cold drink from outside. At the rear, the transverse double bed (1.96m by 1.34m, narrowing to 1.16m on the nearside) is made up of three mattress sections which can be stowed to give a full-height garage space.

The V 55SP TentTop is the same campervan, bar the roof, as the standard V 55SP. It, too, comes with a choice of three upholsteries and 140hp or 180hp engines, both linked to Fiat's new eight-speed automatic transmission as standard. Exterior colours are white, Expedition Grey or black.

The slightly larger V 60SP, based on the six-metre Fiat, has a similar layout to its little brother, but the bigger van gives it a bit more space inside, including a larger double bed across the rear (1.95m by 1.40m).

The campervan portfolio is completed by the V 65SL, built on the extra-long Fiat van. This has a similar half-dinette lounge, central washroom and side kitchen to the V 60SP but the additional length benefits the rear bedroom, where twin beds allow lengthways sleeping. Mounted low, these beds provide easy access and can also be used as settees in the daytime. If you require an additional berth, a hammock-type bunk can also be added above the rear beds.

UK-bound Sun Living campervans also gain the All-Inclusive Pack, featuring cab blinds, an awning, Lattoflex beds, pillows, carpets, an insulated/heated waste tank, 100Ah leisure battery, TV bracket, reversing camera, and Truma Combi D 6 E diesel/electric heating.

A Fiat Luxury Pack is also available, adding an electric parking brake, 10in radio display, colour-coded bumper, front fog lights, black skidplate and 16in alloy wheels.

SUNLIVING
MADE BY ADRIA MOBIL

FREELOSOPHY
Do Not Disturb

Freedom is in the little things. Here and now. When you can dodge schedules, leave behind the complexity of everyday and match your own pace, feeling carefree. Enjoy a cosy atmosphere and brilliant design for maximum comfort with minimal fuss, so you can relax from the moment you hit the road and every second that you spend inside. **Are you ready to chase your freedom?** **gb.sun-living.com**

MOTORHOMES

CAMPERVANS

S SERIES Ford

A SERIES Ford

V SERIES FIAT

Visit our website

AUTOHAUS

From humble beginnings in a Somerset farmyard, Autohaus has grown to become one of the UK's leading campervan conversion companies

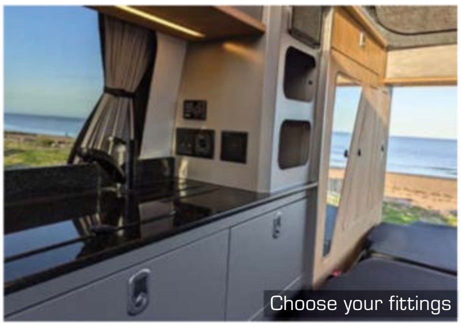
Ford
AUTOHAUS
factory

Words & pictures ▮ Iain Duff

Tony Payne

Tony Payne started out as a mobile caravan technician more than two decades ago. When he moved into his first workshop on a farmyard near Taunton, in the unit next door there was a tiny, one-man band campervan converter company called Autohaus.

It had been in business since 1994 but by 2007 it was only building a couple of 'vans a year. Having converted a few horseboxes, Tony was interested... and promptly took up an offer to buy the business for £10,000 ("because I liked the name").



Choose your fittings

"Everyone said I was mad," he recalls. "I thought I was mad. And I thought it was even madder when the following year we had the recession, so I thought that I had just wasted my £10,000!

"When I took over, they were building one or two a year. The first year we took over we built 12 'vans, and then last year we did 187 units, mainly Volkswagens and Fords."

Autohaus quickly outgrew the farmyard workshop, and around seven years ago the operation moved to a new premises in Minehead. At the factory new models are designed, furniture built and fittings installed.

Inside the Spartan

Tony told me, "We're a bit different from most manufacturers in that we tend to make everything ourselves. So, we manufacture all our furniture in-house, we manufacture a lot of our upholstery in-house. And we buy in the best products we can from across Europe, like Reimo pop-top roofs on the majority of vehicles and Dometic appliances, so it's all type approved and NCC approved products.

"We found that we have an advantage over some of the larger companies – if you break something like a cupboard door or similar, whereas a lot of our competitors buy goods in, we actually make it here. So, it's not really an issue for us to repair something quite quickly and efficiently."

Autohaus currently has eight different models on offer in various configurations built on a variety of base vehicles – the majority of them Volkswagens. Customers first choose the base vehicle and specification and colour they want. The next stage is to decide on the interior detail – the colour and material of the upholstery, furniture and flooring and the interior lighting they want. Once all those decisions have been made you will have the blueprint for a vehicle that is very much your own.

Fitting out the inside

The vehicle is then taken to the cutting bay where everything that can be taken out is taken out. Anything that can't be removed is masked in preparation for the major surgery – the cutting of a huge hole in the roof. After all this time, Tony still describes this as "a frightening thing." He says, "It's a brand-new vehicle and you're spending in excess of £30,000, but you chuck half of it in the skip!"

The van is then moved to the 'clean' side of the factory where all the window panels are removed, the edges treated, safety frames fitted and sound deadening, insulation and wiring looms put in. The roof – colour-matched to the vehicle in the in-house paint shop – is then fitted. By this time, Tony's son, Chris, and the team have cut and built the furniture and within a week it's all fitted and the 'van is more or less ready. If your base vehicle of choice is in stock, you could have your dream campervan on your driveway within four or five weeks.

Working under a VW

Safety is obviously a major issue in campervan conversions, but Autohaus customers should be reassured that the 'van they are buying is safe. Unlike some competitors, Tony decided to go down the road of getting Type Approval for his vehicles, in the knowledge that this would be something that would make them stand out from the crowd as well as ensuring their 'vans meet safety standards.

Attaching roof fabric

"As I found when I started, to stand out in the market, you've got to have something different," he says. "So, we decided that we were going to go against the trend of everyone just building vans in sheds and not worrying about it particularly. Even though some of these vehicles are built very well, we decided that we would go down the Type Approval path."

Autohaus is currently preparing for the arrival of the new VW T7, but like many in the industry, Tony is unsure how the new version of the classic Transporter, essentially a Ford van with a VW badge, will be received by the campervan community. Tony hopes that VW hasn't shot itself in the foot. Although Autohaus has a design lined up for the new Transporter, at the time of writing there was no indication on when the base vehicles would be delivered or what they would cost. At last October's NEC show there were signs that, rather than wait to see what the the new T7 was like, customers were preferring to go with 'vans built on other base vehicles, such as the Ford Custom, Renault Trafic and VW Crafter.

One of those Ford-based 'vans is the new Spartan, which caught the eye at the NEC show and is one of Autohaus' key models for 2025. A four-berth, side kitchen model, it's built on the Tourneo Custom, the more refined passenger version of the Transit panel van. Sleek and stylish on the outside, it's a high-spec camper for couples and family adventures and is designed to deliver as comfortable a holiday experience as possible.

Insulation and wiring

A benefit of being a relatively small manufacturer is that it's easy to tweak layouts and make improvements. Tony explains, "We're always evolving everything as we're a small manufacturer, we might make five or six 'vans of the same model and then on the fifth one, we might say, 'I think we can make it a little bit better. We need to change this, or we'll add this to the product or take this away from it'."

Choice of 'van lining

For all the uncertainty over the future of the Transporter, Tony knows that there is a part of the market that will always want a camper with the VW badge. As a result, it can be difficult to persuade customers to go for a different option, even if the product on offer is just as good. The Autohaus Creston is a good example... based on the Renault Trafic, it comes packed with extra features as standard but, Tony says, persuading buyers to choose it over a Transporter-based 'van has been hard work. In the end it's the price (around

£64,000) that is the clincher.

"People don't think of a Renault as a campervan. So, basically, what we decided to do was get the Highline variant of the Renault Trafic with all the toys on it... LED lights and bits and pieces. And then we would fully load it, so they come with leather upholstery, oven, grill, awning with light, alloy wheels, sidebars, diesel heater... everything is pretty much in it that you would expect. The Renault is gradually getting traction now, but it's been a slow burner."

Tony's theory is that most people wouldn't be able to tell the difference between one vehicle and another if they couldn't see the badge. "There are subtle differences inside," he says, "but the driving quality of the new vehicles today are so close. They all drive ever so well.

"We spent a lot of time and money developing the Creston and it's only just starting now to take off and that is only on price point. If it was the same price as the Volkswagen, it wouldn't have a chance."

If you really want to go "off piste" with your campervan design, that's an option, too.

"If you've got something completely, totally nuts that you want built and we've got time to do it and we feel like we can do it justice, then we will do it."

Information

AUTOHAUS CAMPERVAN CONVERSIONS

Unit 12a, Vennlands Business
Centre, Mart Road,
Minehead, Somerset
TA24 5BJ
T 01643 703283
W autohaus.co.uk

ON THE SPOT

What is your ethos?

I like to think that we try to offer good value for money because we try to build a quality product. We don't cut corners on the products we use. Reimo roofs, for example, are not the cheapest on the market, but the back up from Reimo is second to none. We use Dometic, Webasto, all good products. We try to build something that is a quality product at an affordable price. I believe that a campervan has got to be affordable first and foremost. My first house cost less than one of my campervans, and that always bothers me.

The only reason our vehicles are getting more expensive is because the base vehicles themselves have gone up in price. Even from a couple of years ago, a 150 DSG Volkswagen to us was about £26-27,000. Now they're £35,000. And there's nothing I can do about that. We're not interested in making money on the base vehicle.

The only way we can get better at it and make our 'vans competitive is by getting quicker at building them, and that's why we brought in technology like CNC machines for cutting the furniture. The furniture is now made in such a way that even I can put it together. And I'm no carpenter!

How has the market changed since you started?

For the first nearly new T5 that I bought from the Silver Street dealership, I paid £10,000, including VAT. It was a year-old T5 with 10,000 miles on the clock. My build cost was £15,000 and we sold it for £25,000. The customer had that vehicle for seven years and then we sold it on his behalf and got £32,500. That's how the market has gone up. We gave him all of his money back and we still made a profit on selling it.

What makes a great conversion?

I think it's down to personal preference. With us, the build quality stands up over time and we try to be as stylish as possible. We're always tweaking the design, trying to make it a little bit nicer. We put curved fridge doors on the Ashtons and Tristone worktops. We're always asking, "How can we make that just a little bit nicer?"

Over the years, all of our vehicles have had a family resemblance, but they've just got better and better over time, and the quality of manufacture has got better and better. We used to do everything by hand but, for example, we haven't been doing knock-on trims now for 10 years or more. We've been edge banding our furniture. It all costs money, but it speeds up the process and makes a product that lasts longer. Now, every year that goes by, the quality gets better and better.

What else makes you stand apart from competitors?

From my service background, I need to be able to get it apart to fix things, whereas some other people seem to lose that; they tuck everything away behind a panel and cover the panel over. If something goes wrong, then there's an issue, because you've got to strip it all back to nothing. We always think of the service/repair side of things.

Inside the factory

AUTOHAUS
Factory

BUILDING CAMPERS SINCE
1994

AUTOHAUS
Factory

A family business with over 30 years of experience, Autohaus provides expertly converted Motorhomes and Campervans tailored to the customers style of camping. Currently specialising in conversions on VW, Ford, Fiat and Renault, they are constantly updating conversions and exploring new innovative ideas for improvement - the latest being the Autohaus Camelot C600 using the VW Crafter base vehicle and the Autohaus Spartan using the Ford Tourneau SWB. They also convert an Autohaus Creston on the SWB Renault Traffic. All the conversions are Type Approved and NCC Approved, ensuring the conversion is built to the highest standard of quality and safety.

TOURNEO
AUTOHAUS

Pixabay

ncc approved manufacturer
Manufacturer declares compliance to:
BS EN 1646
European Health & Safety Standard

To view all models visit the website autohaus.co.uk
or arrange a tour of the factory in Minehead Somerset.
Call 01643 703283 to make an appointment.

REVIEWED

SWIFT MONZA S

With 19in wheels and black leather, there's a racy side to the new Swift Monza but is it practical, too?

Words & pictures
Peter Vaughan

WATCH THE VIDEO
motorhome.ma/review321

I'd barely pulled onto the Ferry Meadows Caravan and Motorhome Club site when a fellow camper strolled over to admire the Swift Monza. It's that sort of campervan – from the Grey Matter colour (one of four no-cost options) to the 19in Lustre Nickel alloy wheels, it looks like the latest thing. Which, of course, it is.

Based on the brand-new Tourneo Custom, the Monza was one of the first conversions of the new Ford to hit the market. It represents an investment of over half a million pounds in an effort to create the sort of OEM look found in a Mercedes Marco Polo or Volkswagen California. But with a slightly more affordable cost, its £73,495 list price also including a very comprehensive spec.

The Monza name isn't new, the first generation of Swift's campervan having arrived in 2021. This one moves the game on, especially in terms of the sophisticated base vehicle, while retaining the top-quality German fittings like the Reimo Variotech seat system and SCA elevating roof. It won't be short of competitors, either, as converters rush to launch new Ford-based models in the changeover period between T6.1 and T7 Volkswagens. Few rivals, however, will be able to boast Whole Vehicle Type Approval, a network of 19 dealers around the UK and being produced by an approved Ford Pro converter.

DAILY DUTIES

The Monza is the sort of campervan that's designed to fit into your everyday life. It's a little wider and longer than the old Transit/Tourneo Custom but still fitted (just) into a parking bay at the local Tesco. And, while I was initially surprised to find a manual gearbox in the test vehicle, the Ford's shift quality is so slick that I really didn't mind.

Of course, an automatic is available, too – and sensibly priced at £1,995, especially as that also includes an upgrade from 150hp to 170hp, as well as a slightly higher maximum gross weight. The standard motor offers more than adequate performance, if not the sparkling acceleration of the previous 170hp model. Those wanting a truly cutting-edge camper, however, may want to wait for the Monza PHEV, the plug-in hybrid (petrol/electric) version that's coming, albeit at a substantially higher price (£84,995).

In the meantime, you can enjoy the Tourneo's up-to-the-minute spec, from different drive modes (Normal, Eco, Sport, Slippery) to a raft of assistance and safety systems. There's a fully digital dashboard and a 13in touchscreen with Apple CarPlay, Android Auto, sat-nav and a reversing display, but all this tech isn't foolproof – the Monza thought it was in Downham Market when parked

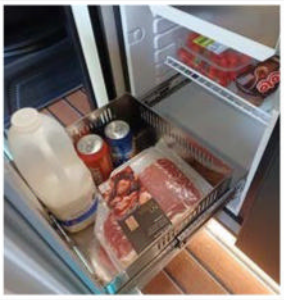
PROS

- Large roof bed on a sprung base
- Reimo Variotech sliding seat with three belts and Isofix fittings

CONS

- Fresh water filler inside the boot area
- Location of heater exhaust (especially if using an awning)

THE MONZA IS THE SORT OF CAMPERVAN THAT IS DESIGNED TO FIT INTO YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE



up in Peterborough...

More welcome in soggy September were the superb headlights with automatic main beam and cornering function. The cab chairs have three-stage heating, along with excellent lumbar support and twin armrests, while the electric parking brake makes for easier seat swivelling as well as an unobstructed corridor through to the rear.

As well as providing a remarkably car-like drive, the Tourneo has the looks of an MPV, with its flush, tinted glazing (only small openings, though) and colour-coded details – not just bumpers and mirrors, but even the mains hook-up flap. Another surprise is the external barbecue point, while an outside shower (cold water only) is also fitted as standard. To find that, you'll need to open the right-hand sliding door, which doesn't offer access to the vehicle but allows you to service the portable loo without dragging it through the 'van.

Also outside (underslung) are the fresh and waste water tanks, both tucked under the back where a spare wheel would usually go (so a fix 'n' go kit is provided instead). The water filler is inside, in the boot, so you'll have to be extra careful when filling up to avoid flooding the interior!

And while we're on the downsides, I'm not sure that the exhaust for the Eberspächer diesel-fired heating (another standard feature) is sensibly placed (under the front nearside door) – its fumes won't be welcome in a drive-away awning!

POP UP THE POP-TOP

I'm always pleased to see manufacturers turning to the best brands for fixtures such as the pop-top and, here, Swift uses renowned German brand, SCA. It has belt 'n' braces catches on either side to secure it down and an upholstered flap to provide a tidy headlining in the cab when you're motoring.

The top lifts manually but requires no real effort and, once up, you can unzip a huge section, encompassing the front and maybe a third of each side, to reveal a bugproof mesh instead. Great if you're in Portugal, not so great in Peterborough, especially with biblical rain forecast, rain that flooded our pitch!

The weather didn't give us much hope of solar power, either, but the 200W panel on the roof is a great addition for off-grid use, even if its fitment is not the neatest.

There's an LED strip around the top of the roof for artificial illumination but the only other daylight comes from a small window on the offside.

Unusually, there are no reading lights or USBs in the roof but the upper bed is included and it's a good one – 1.96m by 1.18m on Caraflex plastic springs. There's a folding ladder to aid climbing aloft, which you can store in the boot.

BOOT-IFUL

In any side kitchen campervan, you should take a look in the boot before being wowed by the interior décor. This aspect is just so crucial to the practicality of these vehicles as it's such a large proportion of your overall storage capacity.

Lift the large tailgate here and you'll find a corner cupboard on the offside that's big enough to house a mains lead, hose, two levelling wedges and the exterior shower attachment. Under that is the gas compartment – an unusually generous one, taking a 6kg Calor cylinder. That should last an eternity as it's only for cooking (heating is by diesel, the fridge is electric and there's no hot water).

In 'camping mode', you'll usually have the rear section of mattress in the horizontal position, creating room underneath for outdoor gear like chairs, boots, etc, and space on top for bedding and perhaps soft bags for extra clothing. Both areas are a good size and you can vastly increase boot space because the Variotech seat slides forward on rails.

You can also tip the boot area mattress to vertical if you have taller items to carry and, as you lift this up, you'll spot the table stored on the underside. It's a free-standing unit, so there's no need to carry another for al fresco dining, but it seemed rather heavy and you might want to stow it more accessibly on top of the mattress if the Met Office is suggesting inclement times. There are also 12V (nearside) and 230V (offside) sockets in the boot area.

IN BLACK 'N' WHITE

While there's a range of colourful options for the exterior of the new Monza, the interior offers Hobson's choice. The original Monza came with light or dark furniture finishes, where the new one mixes the two.

Mrs V described the interior as 'very manly', I retorted that it's very automotive. It's certainly clear to see that a huge investment has gone into tooling up for plastic trim panels around the windows, etc, to blend the Ford finish in the cab seamlessly with Swift's treatment in the rear.

Yes, this is another classic side kitchen layout but, with the black half-leather upholstery, duo-tone furniture and cassette blinds throughout, it has a premium feel. The lighting impresses, too, with ambient light under the kitchen counter and at floor level, blue strip lights alongside the floor rails and a dimmable LED strip that circumvents almost the whole roof cut-out.

Access to the 'van is another aspect that's improved, the new Ford having a lower floor and a step just inside the sliding door. Then, once inside, the SCA roof gives up to 2.40m of headroom (up front) and the Reimo sliding seat adds versatility. Kids can be brought closer to the cab for travel and there are two Isofix positions, three seatbelts and

FACT FILE

SWIFT MONZA S
Price from £73,495
As tested £73,690
Base vehicle Ford Tourneo Custom SWB
Berths 4
Travel seats 5
Length 5.05m (16ft 7in)
Width 2.15m (7ft 1in)
Height 2.07m (6ft 9in)
Gross vehicle weight 3,115kg (manual), 3,175kg (automatic)
Payload 446kg (manual), 453kg (automatic)

KEY FEATURES

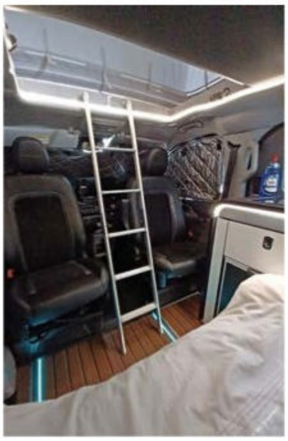
- Dometic two-burner hob, separate grill (optional)
- Vitrifrigo 42-litre drawer-style fridge
- Lower bed: 2.01m x 1.17m; Rear double: 1.96m x 1.18m
- 40-litre underslung fresh water tank
- 29-litre underslung waste water
- Eberspächer 2.2kW diesel-fired blown-air space/water heating. No hot water system
- 95Ah leisure battery

OPTIONS

- Fitted to test vehicle: Dometic Mini Grill (£195)
- Other options available: Automatic gearbox with 170hp engine (£1,995)
- Chrome Blue, Magnetic Grey or Artisan Red paintwork (no extra cost)

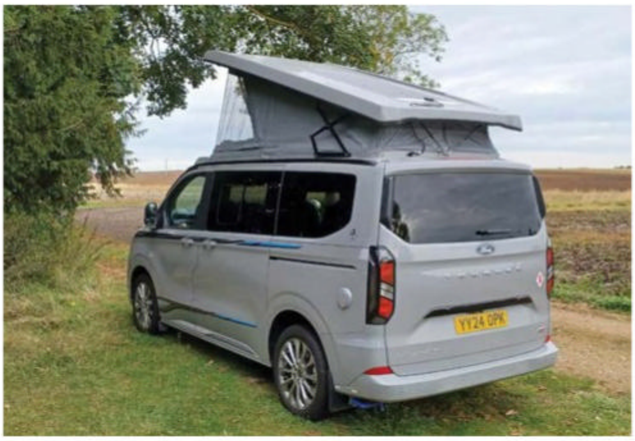
THANK YOU

SWIFT GROUP
W swiftgroup.co.uk



VERDICT

The first-generation Swift Monza was the 2023 Pop-Top Campervan of the Year. The new one is a little bigger, as well as being better equipped and better to drive. It manages that OEM-style look of a VW California, while still being competitively priced, but it will also face stiff competition from numerous other new Ford campervans that are hitting the market for 2025.



adjustable head restraints. The bench is at a comfortable height and it has USB ports on both sides. Just don't allow the little ones to eat crisps – crumbs show up terribly on that black seat trim...

You don't sleep on the leather as the squab cushion flips over and the backrest then falls forward in its place. There are just three sections to this bed and it's flat and very long (2.01m). There are rear speakers (but no reading lights) over the head of the bed. In the morning, a brew is possible but you'll need to lift the end of the mattress in order to access the fridge.

AHEAD OF THE CURVE

Whether or not you like the black and white finish of the galley, you're sure to find the curves at the front end of the worktop and the rear, where it sweeps up into the side of the wardrobe, appealing. You might also like the fact that you can have a grill (not always possible in this size of camper) – it's a £195 option that I would live without to gain an extra cupboard.

There's a range of storage provided here, starting (from the cab end) with a hidden pop-out shelving unit that can house small items like condiments, bread rolls and biscuits, but not tins of soup or cereal packets – those have to go, instead, lying on their sides in the top lockers above the hob and sink.

Next, there's a cutlery drawer (without utensil holder) and under that is a drawer-style compressor fridge. Its 42-litre capacity is easily accessed and there's a tiny freezer compartment inside.

Under that optional grill is the largest cupboard, designed to hold a Dometic 972 portable toilet. I used to own one of these and found it flimsy, so soon swapped it for a Porta Potti but I'm not sure if one of those would fit. In any case, Swift supplies the Dometic loo as standard. Above it, a shelf provides space for pots and pans.

Moving rearwards, there's a small cupboard that actually proved big enough for all my crockery and under that is one of those compartments that always seems to be blocked by the seat, although here you can fumble into the side of the space via the bottom of the wardrobe.

Above here are the controls for lights, water pump, etc – all easy to use – and a single three-pin socket. Then, finally, behind a tambour door is the wardrobe. It has a generous drop of 87cm from its front-to-back hanging rail but is probably more useful for folded garments with the mid-height shelf left in situ.

Further storage is found in a supersized drawer under the back seat but it was a surprise to find no magazine pockets on the backs of the cab seats (you could always add one of those organisers that's suspended from the head restraints).

Award winning
Campervan
& Motorhome
insurance

What motorhome
CAMPERVAN
INSURANCE
PROVIDER
OF THE YEAR
2024

Caravan guard
Trust us to insure your freedom

0800 470 1791
caravanguard.co.uk/cp

Caravan Guard Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

XC Duo
wallas
Cooking & Heating
from one product
Diesel Fuelled

For a safe, cosy camper van
choose a Wallas XC Duo
Tel: 01663 734800
Trade enquiries welcome - Kuranda UK Ltd
www.campervanheating.co.uk

CAMBRIDGE
CAMPERVANS
VW Specialist

Brand New
VW T6.1 110PS
Campervan, SWB,
Tailgate, Delivery Miles
From £54,995

campervan
Awards 2024
HIGHLY COMMENDED
creation

✆ 01480 461463
@ enquiries@cambridgecampervans.co.uk
www.cambridgecampervans.co.uk

dt dubtricks
AIRCOOLED VW SPECIALIST & CAMPERVAN CONVERTER

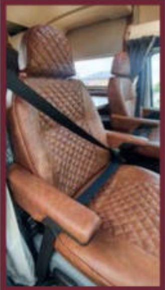
Bespoke full & part van conversions. VW Specialist but can convert any model.
We fit windows, pop tops, electrics, heaters, mouldable carpet, Stereos & more

WWW.DUBTRICKS.CO.UK | DUBTRICKS@HOTMAIL.CO.UK | 01423 780147
LOW HALL BARN, DACRE, HARROGATE, NORTH YORKSHIRE, HG3 4AA

reluxe
IN DIVISION WITH PREMIER FURNISHINGS

Please contact us for all your
enquiries and one of our dedicated
team will be more than happy to help.
www.premierfurnishings.co.uk
faith@premier-furnishings.co.uk
Tel 0115 931 6940

BEFORE


AFTER

EMBROIDERY

SEWING

PROUD SUPPLIERS TO AUTO SLEEPERS

UPHOLSTERY

FREE
PERSONALISED
DOG BED
WITH EVERY
BOOKING
MADE

Reluxe Furnishings by Premier Furnishings offer a personalised bespoke service if your upholstery interior is looking tired and needs a new lease of life. An in-house embroidery machine is available and a wide range of different fabrics and leather options are on offer.
Hook up is available on site so you can stay over and also on offer is a courtesy car while you stay. We pride ourselves on quality and customer service.

BIG ENOUGH TO COPE, SMALL ENOUGH TO CARE

Hertford Campers
The Spirit of Adventure

www.hertfordcampers.com
Tel: 0800 020 9553
info@hertfordcampers.com

Nissan NV200 1.6 PETROL AUTOMATIC, 2-3 Berth

NISSAN NV200

The ideal Car/Camper
Used From £24,995
Pre Registered with
Delivery Mileage
from £37,995

STANDARD SPECIFICATION INCLUDES
- Elevating Roof with Zip Windows all round
- Solar Panel
- Automatic Gearbox
- 1.6 Petrol ULEZ Compliant
- Electric Rock N Roll Bed
- Air Conditioning
- 2 Burner Hob & Sink
- Front Pass Swivel Chair
- 12V Leisure Battery
- 240V Hook Up
- 40 Litre Fridge 240v/12v
- Kitchen area and roof lighting
- Side kitchen
- 2 Sliding Side Doors

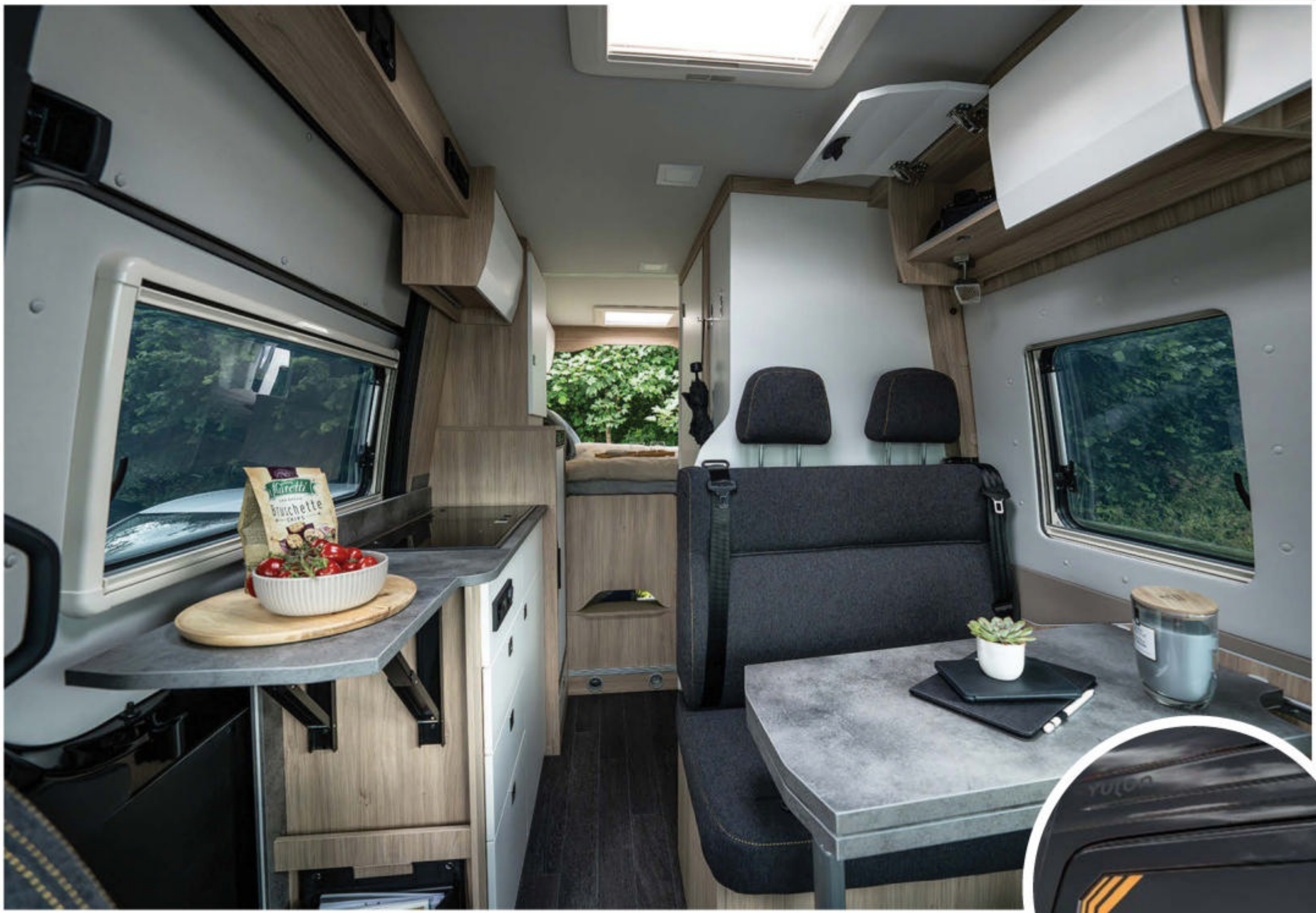
We also stock the Nissan E-NV200 Fully Electric Camper

REVIEWED

YUCON V-CITY

It's back to black for Frankia's latest Mercedes-Benz campervan

Words & pictures | Peter Vaughan



The Yucon V-City 6.0 BD is a more affordable way into the world of Mercedes Sprinter-based campervans. New for this season it's basically the baby brother to the K-Peak that was launched last year.

On the outside, this short-wheelbase Sprinter has a very stealthy look, all in black. There is some orange detailing to match the Yukon branding, but it's very subtle. Even the wheels (which are steel, not alloy) are black.

There's a toilet cassette hatch and a mains hook-up socket on the nearside. It's also got extended side pods for the bed; you can't sleep across the width of the vehicle in a Sprinter without these. The one on the nearside is deeper than the one on the offside, where the sliding door has to clear it. Then, on the offside, you'll also find the fresh water tank filler, but that's about it.

Stepping inside is easy thanks to the good-sized step, then it's a flat floor from cab through to the bedroom. Both cab seats swivel and there's a folding table. It's got a swing-out extension so four people can eat although the tabletop is very narrow for four place settings.

The other seating is a half-dinette bench for two with automotive head restraints. Underneath here is some storage space but it's also home to the habitation electrics, so with the battery and all the electrical gubbins, you'd need to be careful how you stowed stuff here. There is a small floor hatch in the lounge that's for water tank servicing.

The kitchen has a pull-out extension at the side; it's got some worktop without that, though. Fittings include a two-burner hob combined with a sink that has a fold-up tap. There's a little locker above with a light and then, below, there are mains and USB sockets. The three-pin socket is right next to the

WHO IS YUCON?

Yucon is the campervan arm of premium German motorhome manufacturer, Frankia, with a range of models mainly based on the Fiat Ducato and the Mercedes Sprinter.

UNFORGETTABLE CAMPERVAN ADVENTURES!

Let us take you to all the best places

Subscribe to campervan for just £14.99 a quarter and enjoy:

- Inspiring road trips
- Reviews of new campervans
- The very best of vanlife **AND MUCH MORE!**

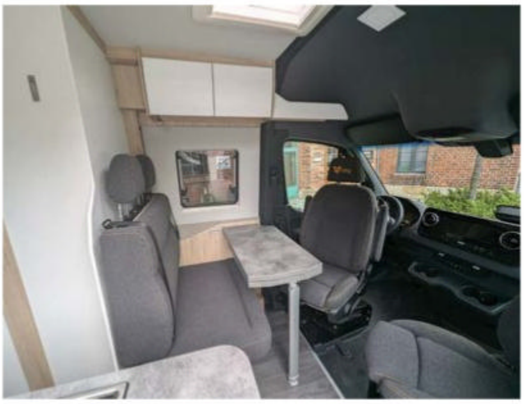
SUBSCRIBE NOW

motorhome.ma/cpvnspring25

Call 01778 392019 quoting cpvn/spring25

Offer is open to UK residents for a limited time

SCAN ME



worktop, so you can use it for a kettle or toaster.

Towards the rear bed is the compressor fridge, with a shallower shelved locker above and another small drawer below, at floor level.

Below the counter, there are three drawers of a decent size, all with soft closing. The bottom one is deeper and there's a cupboard next to that with a shelf in it.

The washroom wall has fold-out coat hooks, which are really useful. When you're not using them, they disappear into a little recess.

Stepping into this compact washroom, it has a bench cassette toilet with just about enough space to sit on it. The shower tray has twin drain holes and the shower has its own faucet. There's a shower curtain (stored in a bag) that goes over the toilet to stop the unit behind the loo getting wet. This space features a locker with four shelves, all with Perspex retaining lips a nice touch. The basin flips down and it holds water, unlike the backless type that some brands use. The washroom has a heater outlet, too.

There are two heater outlets in the base of the bed, facing forwards, plus a really good built-in solid step that allows you to get into bed easily. Unfortunately, there are cupboards on either side of the bedroom, meaning you can't really sit up in bed.

The bed has Froli springs for extra comfort. It comes in three parts so you can lift it to improve your storage in the garage area when needed (for bikes, etc). Those side pods give the bed adequate length and there are opening windows in the back doors.

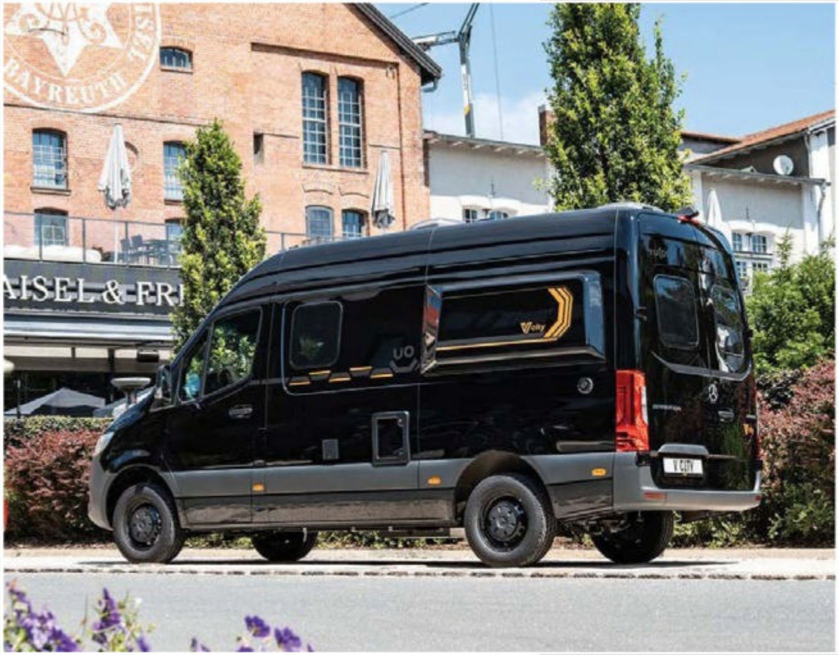
A pop-top roof is available for those needing extra berths, but the V-City is most likely to appeal to couples seeking the three-pointed star in a compact and relatively affordable package.

FACT FILE

YUCON V-CITY
Base Vehicle Mercedes Sprinter
Price from £90,000 (estimated)
Berths 2/4
Travel seats 2/4
Length 5.93m
Width 2.02m
Height 2.74m
Gross weight 3,500kg or 4,100kg
Payload 639kg

BUY A YUCON FROM...

SMC Motorhomes in Newark is the sole UK dealer for Yucon and its sister Frankia brand.



REVIEWED HYMER GRAND CANYON S CROSSOVER

Tough on the outside, refined on the inside – this special CrossOver edition is an off-roader's dream

Words & pictures | Iain Duff

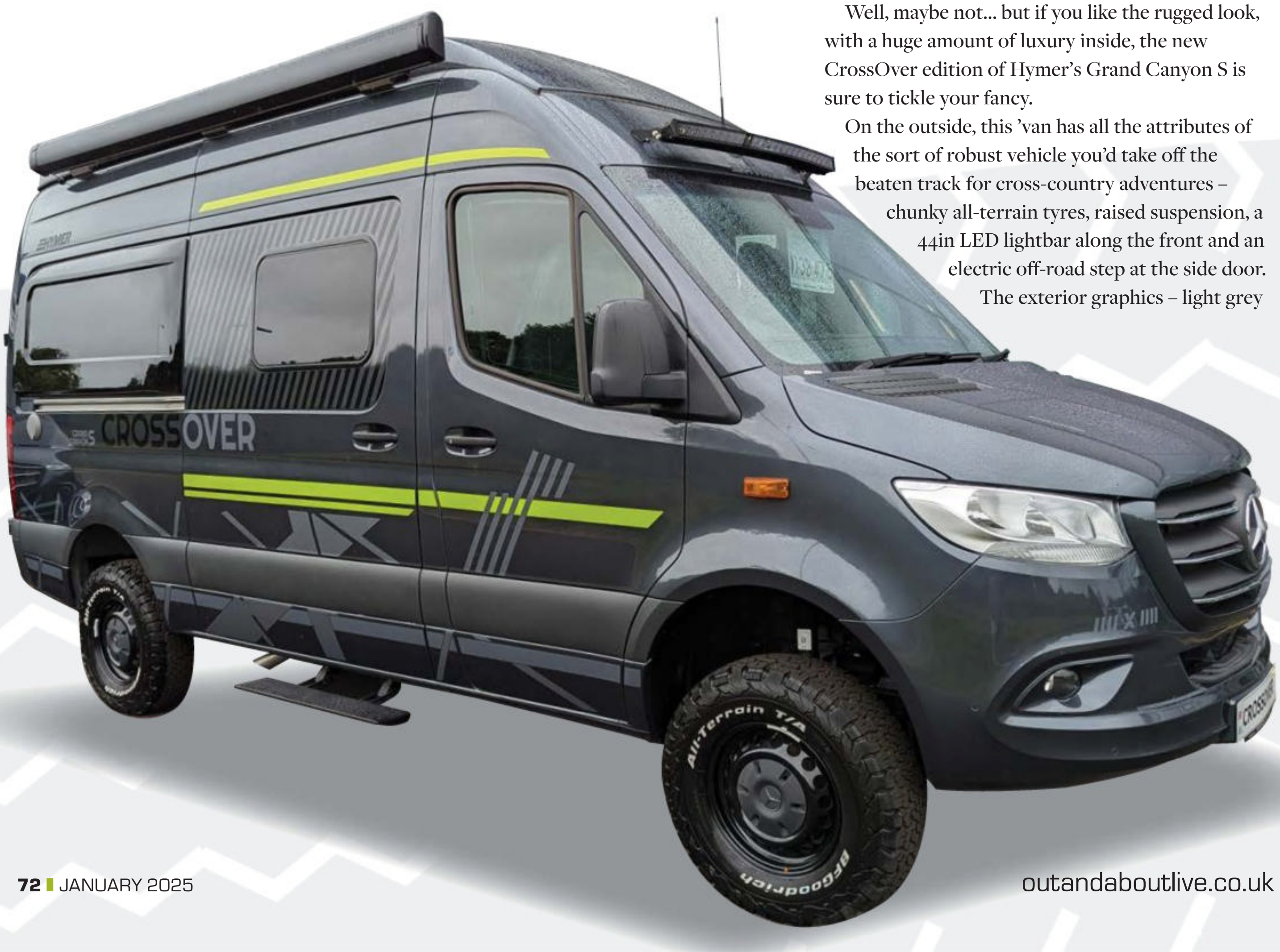
Judging by the number of new campervans we've seen based on 4x4 Sprinters, the UK's dirt tracks are going to be chock-a-block with off-road campers in 2025.

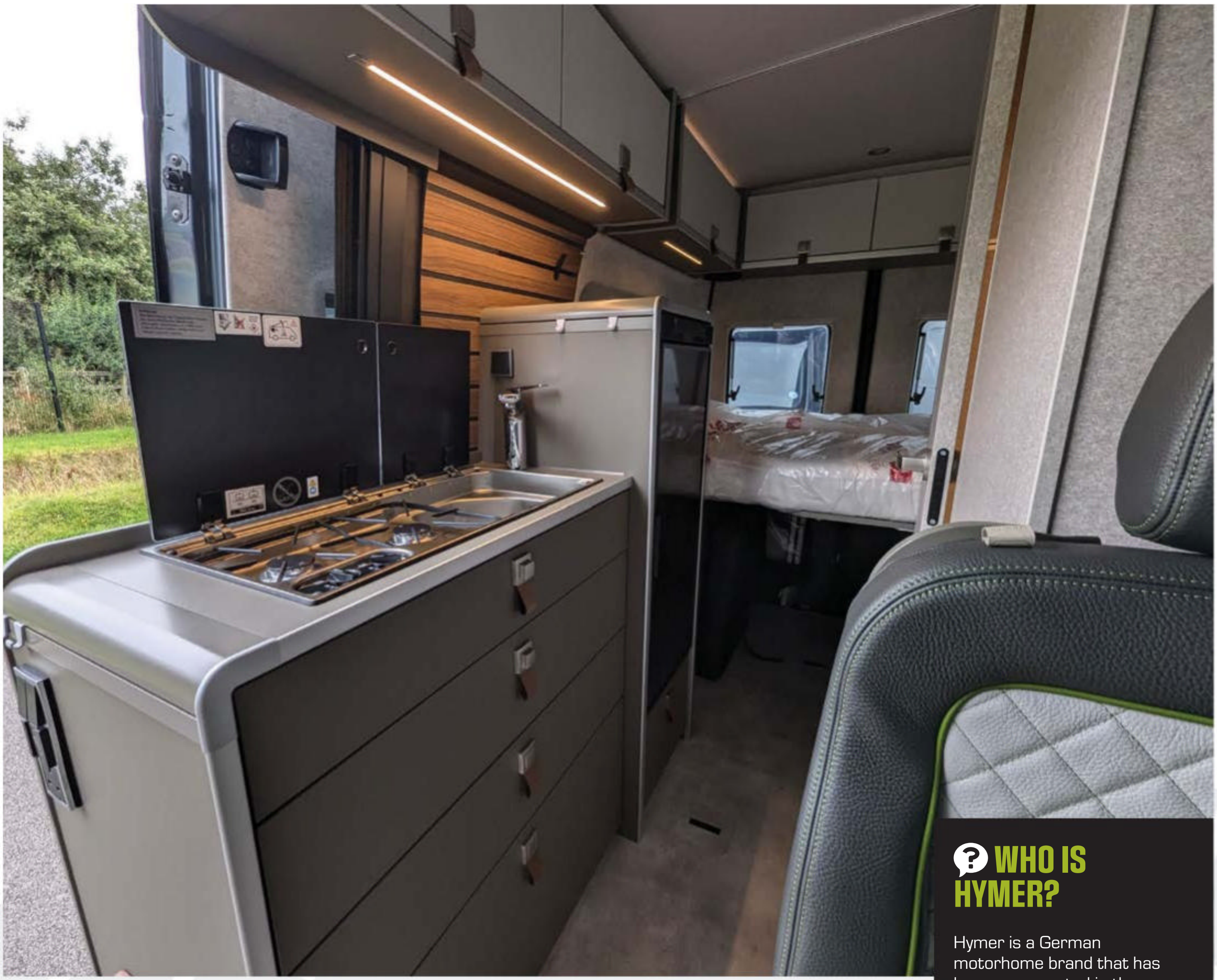
There little doubt that four-wheel-drive 'vans are the big trend for this year. The good news for everyone else is that the main roads should be deserted!

Well, maybe not... but if you like the rugged look, with a huge amount of luxury inside, the new CrossOver edition of Hymer's Grand Canyon S is sure to tickle your fancy.

On the outside, this 'van has all the attributes of the sort of robust vehicle you'd take off the beaten track for cross-country adventures – chunky all-terrain tyres, raised suspension, a 44in LED lightbar along the front and an electric off-road step at the side door.

The exterior graphics – light grey





and lime green, contrasting with the Tenorite Grey bodywork – give it a dramatic, sporty look, too.

If the outside of the 'van is all about getting down and dirty and tackling rough terrain, the interior is a different story. In contrast to the chunky exterior, inside the mood is refined, almost serene, with design touches that could easily have been borrowed from an upmarket hotel.

The walnut wood strip panels on the walls contrast nicely with the warm felt lining and the curved edges on the kitchen unit and overhead lockers add a stylish look along with the chic leather pull straps on the soft-close cupboard and drawer handles.

The ambient light system has multiple levels, including individually adjustable light temperature, and adds to the chilled-out vibe of the camper's interior design.

Ivy Green furniture style is standard with the Indiana seat fabric, and the olive green finish provides a suitably outdoorsy look for a 'van that is designed for exploring the natural world. The CrossOver special upholstery, Lund Leather, is an optional extra (£1,770) for the cab and bench seats.

Amid all the interior design features, practical matters aren't forgotten – the wall panels feature multifunctional rails which you can choose to use for extra storage or more decorative objects.

WHO IS HYMER?

Hymer is a German motorhome brand that has been represented in the UK longer than any of its compatriots. Famous for its B-Class models (which, confusingly, are usually A-class, or fully integrated, motorhomes), the latest line-up includes a separate campervan range that used to be known as HymerCar.

The Free models are the entry-level, mostly Fiat-based but also including the Free S on the front-wheel drive Mercedes Sprinter. Then there are the premium models – Ayers Rock, Grand Canyon, Yosemite and Yellowstone on Fiat and Grand Canyon S on Mercedes (RWD or 4x4). The CrossOver 4x4 model is the range-topper, while Blue Evolution and Campus models add extra kit and value.

Hymer is just one marque within the huge Erwin Hymer Group, which in turn is now owned by the USA company, Thor Industries.

➡

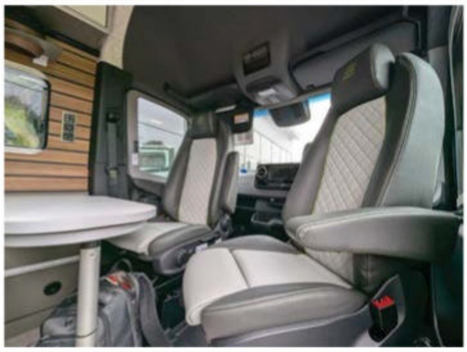
FACT FILE

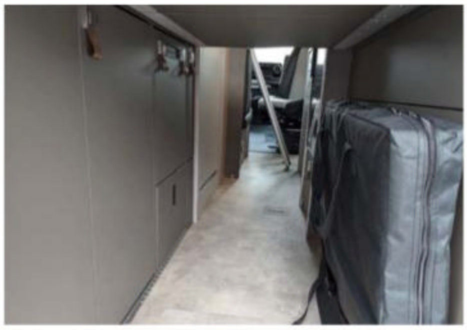
HYMER GRAND CANYON S CROSSOVER
Base Vehicle Mercedes Sprinter 4x4
Price from £120,860
As shown £138, 475
Berths 2 (+2 optional)
Travel seats 4
Length 5.93m
Width 2.06m
Height 2.85m
Gross weight 3,880kg
Payload 686kg

BUY A HYMER FROM...

Hymer has 15 dealers for its campervan range. These include 3 A's in Wales and Thompson Leisure in Northern Ireland. Knowepark is the Scottish retailer.

Then, in England, you'll find Hymers at Adventure Leisure Vehicles (Cumbria), Campersales (Sussex), Cranham (two branches in Essex), Emm-Bee (Lancashire), Travelworld (Stafford), Highbridge (Somerset and Devon branches), Leisure First (Dorset), Lowdhams (Nottingham), Pullingers (Essex), Southdowns (Hampshire) and Harbour Creek (Hayling Island).





The 90-litre refrigerator at the rear end of the kitchen is three-quarter height, so it allows some through vision and a greater feeling of space than if it was full height.

In the downstairs sleeping area, the double bed is a generous 1.95m by 1.35m and features the innovative Lattoflex mattress, a roll-up sleeping system with integrated disc springs that follow the shape of your body and improve comfort. There is storage under here and plenty of room for carrying equipment which can be fixed to the fitted lashing points while driving. To increase the storage area, you can just lift the bed base and roll the mattress up to one side.

The 'van is a two-berth as standard but for an additional £4,430 you can go for the option of a pop-top roof, which has a double bed 'upstairs.' This is even more spacious than the downstairs bed, measuring 2m by 1.22m.

The centrally located washroom has slate-effect walls, a folding basin to create more showering space, a bench cassette toilet and a showerhead that can be passed through the washroom window and attached to the exterior for al fresco washing.

The Grand Canyon S CrossOver features the Hymer Connect system which includes a touchscreen that controls most of the campervan's systems, from the battery and water levels to solar power and lighting. The app also allows you to remotely monitor and adjust some elements when you a're away from the camper.

If your off-road adventures also involve going off-grid, Hymer reckons the CrossOver will give you up to 10 days of self-sufficient camping. For maximum off-grid capability, it comes with Hymer's new smart battery system comprising four 80Ah lithium batteries, as well as a 95W solar panel and 1,300W inverter. A fresh water filter, a second toilet cassette and a 6kW diesel heater all add to the off-grid credentials.

The Merc base vehicle is the 419 CDI with nine-speed automatic transmission and the standard spec list is impressive, including a 10.25in MBUX display screen, cruise control, sat-nav, DAB radio pre-installation and an electric parking brake.

You'll not be remotely surprised to learn that this all comes at a price, and a not insubstantial one at that. The Grand Canyon S CrossOver starts at around £121,000 and, although it does come with a lengthy spec list as standard, there's no getting away from the fact that it's a hefty price tag. The version we looked at was loaded with a ton of extras, including the elevating roof and thermal blanket for the roof, leather seating, cab seat heating, an extra rear bedroom window on the left side and more.

It even comes with a toolkit, complete with a folding shovel and pick-axe!

out&about LIVE
Discover your inner outdoors

NEW LOOK WEBSITE!
LIFE
UNPLUGGED
Campsite Finder
Gear guides
Campervan reviews
Premier Parks
Advice
Campervans for sale

outandaboutlive.co.uk

out&about SHOP
POWERED BY hooluh
outandaboutshop.co.uk
scan me

GET INTO GEAR

Check out our round-up of the latest campervan and outdoor accessories

SILWY MAGNETIC ADAPTOR

We love the Silwy system. Thanks to a magnet at the bottom of these glasses you can secure fixing strips to unused spaces; under lockers, at the top of tall cupboards and the like. The magnets then hold these glasses in place. Plus, you can get coasters for the table that also mean your glass won't topple over if you bump it. But what if you don't want a whole new set of glasses? Silwy has now introduced a magnetic silicone base (we'll gloss over the fact that they've named it the condom!) to allow your glasses to be used with the magnetic storage and coaster system. You essentially get a silicone case to stretch over the base of glasses with a nano magnet inside as well as the gel pad base it sticks to.

The price is currently £2.50 on Amazon for a one-pack with all sorts of colours available, from good old grey to neon yellow So go on, get your glasses the protection they deserve. Plus, there are multipacks available.

PRICE £2.50
W amzn.to/4fNk7ME

JOSEPH JOSEPH SPACE-SAVING PANS

If you're serious about your campervan cooking, getting a good sauce or the right browning effect on your food is essential for the perfect flavour profile. And that is all about the pan and the hob. Gas hobs dominate and should provide a good, controllable level of heat – some come with a burner that's a bit higher powered; better for stir fries and quick sears...

However, the pan is important, too – having a decent weight and durable finish. High-quality pans are bulky, though, but now Joseph Joseph has introduced a stacking range. It's not cheap but solid handles fold or flip down and there are sizes and shapes to suit all.

Treat yourself to one pan that you can use for everything or blow the budget and opt for the three or six-pan set. You could buy them for home and transfer into the 'van come holiday time.

Prices start at £84 for the 20cm frying pan up to £600-plus for the six-piece set. They're not light, but if you've got the payload, you can treat yourself to at least one good pan.

PRICE From £84
W fave.co/3Z1vjiE

AEROPRESS CLEAR BLUE

AeroPress
Tommy's
COFFEE

Better than a cafetiere, perhaps, but is this the answer for coffee lovers on tour? You probably need to be a real coffee lover to forsake your Nescafe or Nespresso for this but the AeroPress has quite a following. You still need to boil water, and probably grind your beans, too, but it does make a nice, smooth cuppa. To use, you separate the two plastic tubes, add a filter and then the coffee – it's recommended to grind your beans to medium-fine (shop-bought ground coffee is said to often be too fine). Then add boiling water and stir before inserting the plunger (the second tube) into the first and gently pushing down.

This is a good alternative for caffeine addicts on the road, but perhaps still not the complete solution. Relatively inexpensive and makes a good coffee but you still have messy grouts to deal with afterwards, which may not be ideal in your 'van.

Oh, and if the blue shown here clashes with your camper's colour scheme, you can choose red, pink, purple, black or green, all at the same price.

PRICE £54.99 (additional filters come in packs of 200, priced at £8.99)
W aeropress.co.uk

NEXT MONTH

FEBRUARY ISSUE ON SALE 16 JANUARY

Sharon Whitcroft

INSIDE THE NEXT ISSUE OF campervan

TAKE A PEEK AT THE PEAKS

The hills are calling on a tour of the Peak District

ALSO IN THE FEBRUARY ISSUE

MEET THE WINNERS

Find out the Campervan of the Year, plus all the other winners in the Out & About Live Campervan Awards 2025

PLUS

- Your guide to buying a new 'van
- 10 award-winning UK campsites
- Full of eastern promise: Norfolk and Essex

ALSO NEWS, VIEWS, REVIEWS AND MUCH MORE

*all content is subject to change

UNFORGETTABLE CAMPERVAN ADVENTURES!
Let us take you to all the best places
SUBSCRIBE TO campervan for just £14.99 and enjoy:
● Inspiring road trips ● Reviews of new campervans
● The very best of vanlife AND MUCH MORE!
SUBSCRIBE NOW
motorhome.ma/cpvnspring25
SCAN ME

Hendre Mynach,
Gwynedd

PREMIER
PARKS 2025
The finest UK campsites, independently assessed

Book your 2025 break with Premier Parks

Adults-only campsites

Family campsites

Dog-friendly campsites

Coastal campsites

Open-all-year campsites

Campsites for fishing

premier-parks.co.uk

Auto-Sleepers
Motorhomes of Excellence

VAN CONVERSIONS
FOR EVERY ADVENTURE

CAMPERVANS
TIME FOR ADVENTURE

Models	Min Berth	Max. Berth
8	2	4

PEUGEOT FIAT

SCAN HERE
For full vehicle specification and 360 tours of the model range.

FORD AIR
TIME TO BREAK FREE

Models	Travel Seats	Max. Berth
1	5	4

Ford ISOFIX

SCAN HERE
For full vehicle specification and 360 tours of the model range.

M-STAR
PREMIUM CAMPERVAN

Models	Travel Seats	Max. Berth
1	2	2

360° MODEL TOURS VIEW TODAY

SCAN HERE
For full vehicle specification and 360 tours of the model range.

FIND YOUR LOCAL DEALER TODAY AT +44(0)1386 853 338 | AUTO-SLEEPERS.COM